Oliver Jens Schmitt (ed.)

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Interpretations and Research Debates

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Edited by
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Introduction: The Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans. Research Questions and Interpretations

Oliver Jens Schmitt

The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans constitutes a major change in European history. Scholarship on the topic is extensive, yet the evidence produced by decades of research is very scattered and lacking comprehensive synthesis, not to mention consensual interpretation. Although major political and military milestones seem to have been investigated thoroughly, there is a notable absence of more theoretical and interpretative approaches that overarch the entire phenomenon rather than merely individual aspects. Scholars have hitherto addressed the topic from various perspectives and employing a wide range of methods, but Byzantine studies, Ottoman studies, Eastern Mediterranean studies and national historiographies in the Balkan countries have yet to establish either a coherent collaboration or a consistent model of interpretation.[1] Dissemination too has proved somewhat problematic; the vast number of detailed studies is often only known to a restricted circle of specialists, and even among these scholars, there are just a few who make use of the evidence available for the entire Balkan Peninsula. This also explains the lack of a general model or models of explanation for the fall of the Balkan-Orthodox Commonwealth. It is not uncommon for historians to offer a narrative of facts they simply take to be self-explanatory. While Ottoman studies focuses on the emergence of a new empire, Byzantine studies and Balkan national historiographies adopt different perspectives. Narratives are therefore often contradictory or fragmentary. At best they partially overlap, but they usually do not reflect competing perspecti-

[1] The only comprehensive monograph on the topic has remained almost unnoticed: Hristo Matanov and Rumjana Mihneva, *Ot Galipoli do Lepanto. Balkanite, Evropa i osmanskoto našestvie 1354–1571 g.* (Sofia: Nauka i iskustvo, 1988). Cf. my research essay Oliver Jens Schmitt, "Südosteuropa im Spätmittelalter: Akkulturierung-Integration-Inkorporation", in: *Akkulturation im Mittelalter*, edited by Reinhard Härtel (Ostfildern: Thorbecke 2014), pp. 81–136. Scholars also tend to disregard older comprehensive monographs which despite their inevitable shortcomings are instructive because of their interpretative schemes, e.g. Jovan Radonić, *Zapadna Evropa i balkanski narodi prema Turcima u prvoj polovini XV veka* (Novi Sad: Izdanje Matice Srpske, 1905).

ves. Fragmentation runs along spatial, chronological and disciplinary lines; the extreme specialization of most scholars in the field and a bibliography in many languages also constitute considerable obstacles for what is needed: a perspective that encompasses the entire Balkan area in a long-term analysis stretching from the second half of the fourteenth century until the beginning of the sixteenth, and use of all sources available in Greek, Latin, Slavonic, Ottoman and European vernacular languages such as Italian, German or French. This alone however would not substantially improve the state of the art in the field.

A key to assessing the Ottoman conquest of Balkans as a long-term process of violence-induced change is comparison, i.e. an enlargement of the heuristic frame both in time and in space. Constant synchronic comparison with Ottoman expansion in Anatolia and the Arab world (cf. the contribution of Reinkowski in this volume), but also with other major processes of expansion and change in European and Mediterranean history, such as the Spanish Reconquista or the conquest of the khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan by the Grand Duchy of Moscow (1552–1556), would open a Eurasian horizon. Important insights could be gained moreover by shaping a diachronic frame of comparison: the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans must also be analyzed in the light of historical transformation studies. The most sophisticated field is certainly Late Antique/Early Medieval studies, which since the end of the eighteenth century have discussed explanatory models for what Edward Gibbon famously called the "fall and decline of the Roman Empire".[2] Key models for interpreting historical change and a controversial discussion of violence-induced discontinuity of cultural, social and administrative patterns – or in a competing perspective their continuity in spite of political and demographic change – lie at the core of a debate that shares with the interpretation of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans a high degree of ideologization and politicization and the very fact that there is still no consensus in assessing the character of long-term historical change. While after 1945 scholars tended to emphasize transitional elements from the Late Antique Roman to the Early Modern medieval world in the vein of Romano-Germanic socio-cultural

[2] A brillant discussion of these models is provided by Alexander Demandt, *Der Fall Roms. Die Auflösung des römischen Reiches im Urteil der Nachwelt* (Munich: C.H.Beck, second edition 2014); Chris Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome. A History of Europe from 400 to 1000* (London: Allen Lange, 2009); Peter Heather, *Der Untergang des Römischen Weltreichs* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2007); Bryan Ward Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Walter Pohl, *Die Germanen* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2004); Walter Pohl, *Die Völkerwanderung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005); *Post-Roman transitions. Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West*, edited by Walter Pohl (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012); *Visions of Community in the post-Roman World. The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300–1100*, edited by Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner and Richard Payne (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

and political symbiosis, reflecting the project of European unification after the Second World war, advocates of rupture still put forward powerful arguments such as the clearly visible decline of material culture between the second and the seventh century AD.[3] In the Balkans, negative judgments concerning Ottoman rule and especially its beginnings had to legitimize the emergence of the modern Christian national state on the territory of the Ottoman Empire in the long nineteenth century. In this case, historians insisted on invasion by Asian barbarians, resistance, disruption, the de-Europeanization and orientalisation of Balkan society and cultures, mass flight and deportation of the population and centuries of anti-Ottoman resistance. The competing narrative developed mainly by Turkish historians and extra-regional Ottomanists close to the formers´ interpretation underline accommodation (*istimalet* policy, a term coined by Halil İnalcık), incorporation, *pax ottomanica*, general improvement of the fiscal status and living standards of the peasant masses, and privileges for the Orthodox Church.[4] This discourse however is marked by several nuances emphasizing the Seldjuk heritage in administration (negating continuity of Byzantine and Balkan Christian structures; Fuad Köprülü[5]) or disagreeing over the impact of Jihad and Gaza as the driving force of the Conquest movement (see below, p. 14–16).

There is an obvious need for a more coherent approach that includes discussions from several fields of research: medieval Balkan history, Byzantine studies, Eastern Mediterranean studies and Ottoman studies. The striking discrepancy between often meticulously detailed research and an impressive progress of knowledge, due not least to recent local and regional studies by Ottomanist scholars and the lack of more general explanatory models stood at the beginning of a discussion process which eventually led to the preparation of this volume. A decisive point in this process were the discussions with colleagues at the University of Sofia, notably Grigor Boykov and Mariya Kiprovska, in October 2012. Contributors were invited thus to engage in a cross-reading of disciplinary perspectives of Medieval Balkan studies, Ottoman studies and Late Medieval Mediterranean studies representing both regional and extra-regional historiographies.

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[3] Cf. the huge research project sponsored by the European Science Foundation (http://www.esf.org/coordinating-research/research-networking-programmes/humanities-hum/completed-rnp-programmes-in-humanities/the-transformation-of-the-roman-world.html, accessed on 6 May 2015); for a critical perspective, Ward Perkins, *The Fall of Rome*.

[4] A representative example is the influential monograph by Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age 1300–1600* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1973), pp. 6–8, 11–16; cf. also Halil İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", in: idem, *The Ottoman Empire : Conquest, Organization and Economy. Collected Studies* (London: Variorum, 1978) part 1, pp. 122–129.

[5] M. Fuad Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire*, translated and edited by Gary Leiser (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

It was however quite evident right from the outset that a single volume would not offer an exhaustive panorama of the period in question and that even a new methodological approach could not be implemented in one single step. This volume therefore rather aims at opening and structuring a new heuristic approach and at coordinating a field of studies that is of crucial importance for understanding change in European history.

The aims of the introductory remarks that follow are twofold: they try to clarify some essential terms, and in a second step, they provide explanation of the historiographical context of this volume.

The *time frame* is probably most easily explained: the focus lies on the roughly two centuries between the conquest of Thrace (starting in 1352) and the stabilization of direct Ottoman rule in the area south of the Danube and the Sava River. Ottoman expansion continued at the periphery of this space, mainly in East Central Europe, directed against Hungary, the Habsburg Realm and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and one might argue that the Ottoman Conquest was eventually only stopped by Süleyman's *débâcle* at Güns (Kőszeg) in 1532, which did not of course prevent the Sultan from expanding in areas where the Habsburgs could not offer military shelter, such as Moldavia (1538).[6] Likewise there is consensus that the consolidation of Ottoman rule was a process with huge time lags between Thrace and Bulgaria, conquered between 1352 and 1396, and the Western and Northern border zone of the Ottoman Empire, subdued between 1463 and 1493[7], not to speak of the Ottoman vassal principalities north of the Lower Danube.

The definition of *space* is more complex. The title of this volume contains the term 'Balkans', the manifold meanings of which have been the object of an intensive and sometimes redundant research debate for several decades.[8] This debate has produced as its smallest common denominator the importance of the Byzantine and Ottoman heritage as defining patterns: the area that can be circumscribed by these elements stands at the core of the volume. It coincides with the "Byzantine Commonwealth" outlined by Dimitri Obolensky,[9] but it

[6] Leopold Kupelwieser, *Die Kämpfe Oesterreichs mit den Osmanen vom Jahre 1526–1537* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1899); cf. the recent publication by István Buriska, *A Contribution to the History of the Turkish Campaign of 1532* (Szombathely/Kőszeg 2007), which unfortunately was not available to me.

[7] Cf. the collection of sources about the battle of Krbava by Ferdo Šišić, "Rukovet spomenika o hercegu Ivanišu Korvinu i o borbama Hrvata s Turcima (1473–1496)", *Starine* 37 (1934): pp. 189–344 and 38 (1937): pp. 1–180.

[8] For a summary of this debate, cf. Konrad Clewing/ Oliver Schmitt (ed.), *Geschichte Südosteuropas* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2011), pp. 7–15.

[9] Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971).

includes with Bosnia a historical region that had remained at the margins or even outside the Byzantine Commonwealth. It is integrated into our concept because Ottoman expansion firmly anchored Bosnia in a socio-cultural and political context whose centre lay in the Southeast. Massive migrations of štokavian-speaking Muslims (mainly from Bosnia) and Orthodoxs temporarily also altered social patterns in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Central Hungary.[10] The Balkans serves in this context as a spatial heuristic tool with flexible border zones. The volume does not however include purely maritime regions such as the Aegean archipelago or the Dodecanese.[11]

While time and space might be thus explained without major theoretical difficulties, the *terminology and concepts* for analysing events and long-term processes prove much more controversial, both inside and outside the scholarly debate.

Conquest, transition, integration or, as recently proposed by Machiel Kiel,[12] *incorporation*, convey different and not seldom contradictory meanings, although they are meant to describe the same historical process of change. Like other major moments of change in history, the establishment of Ottoman rule in the Balkans defies any terminological simplification. Our discussion can learn much from comparable discussions mentioned above: did the Western Roman Empire slowly fade away in a long transition process or was it murdered, as the French historian André Piganiol put it?[13] Were the Germanic communities "barbarian invaders" or an integral part of a new Romano-Germanic political and socio-cultural symbiosis that stands at the roots of medieval or even modern Europe?

The choices of research topics, theories and terminology do not occur in a purely neutral scholarly context. This does not mean that they are not legitimate. The point is that they should be explained. For the sake of clarity, the ed-

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[10] Dragana Amedoski, "Demografske promene u nahiji Bovan kao primer depopulacije Rumelije u 16 veku", *Istorijski časopis* 59 (2010): pp. 225–242, offers important evidence for the dynamics of this migration movement.

[11] Cf. Nicolas Vatin, *L´Ordre de Saint-Jean-de-Jérusalem, l´Empire ottoman et la Méditerranée orientale entre les deux sièges de Rhodes (1480–1522)* (Paris: Peters 1994); Nicolas Vatin, *Sultan Djem* (Ankara: Imprimerie de la Société turque d´histoire, 1997); Zacharias Tsirpanles, *Anekdota engrapha gia te Rhodo kai tis noties Sporades apo to archeio ton Ioanniton hippoton* (Rhodes: Yppo-Tapa 1995); Anthony Luttrell and Elisabeth Zachariadou, *Sources for Turkish History in the Hospitallers' Rhodian Archive, 1389–1422* (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2008); Guillaume Saint-Guillain, *L'Archipel des seigneurs. Pouvoirs, société et insularité dans les Cyclades à l´époque de la domination latine (XIIIe-Xve siècle).* PhD thesis (Paris 2003).

[12] Machiel Kiel, "The Incorporation of the Balkans into the Ottoman Empire, 1353–1453", in: *The Cambridge History of Turkey, vol. 1: Byzantium to Turkey*, edited by Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 138–191.

[13] André Piganiol, L'*empire chrétien* (325–395) (Paris : Presses universitaires de France, ²1972), p. 466.

itor wishes to define his own standpoint, which is not necessarily shared by the contributors to this volume: he approaches the topic as a trained Byzantinist who sees himself as a Balkan medievalist with a great interest in Ottoman studies, whose results he tries to follow as a non-specialist. He is also interested in the use and abuse of medieval history by modern European societies and élites, especially in Southeastern Europe (which does not imply that this phenomenon does not occur elsewhere as well). His academic training, linguistic competencies, the archives accessible to him, explain why he privileges at the outset a Southeastern European perspective complemented by a Byzantine view.

As a term, *conquest* contains the dimensions of warfare and violence, but it also points to political and socio-cultural consequences of military events – it does not refer to a single event, but to a long-term violence-induced process. To Ottomanists, it is certainly more direct and more emotional than e.g. integration, not to mention transition or incorporation, which only at first glance appear less emotional – in fact, they convey a strong ideological strand and might cause uneasiness in other, i.e. non-Ottomanist, circles, since they deliberately downplay the violent aspect of change and focus very much on the outcome of a process which is interpreted in essence as positive. From the wide range of terminological possibilities for describing what happened in the Balkans between ca. 1350 and ca. 1500, conquest certainly fits better than invasion (which does not fully take into account the massive participation of local actors in the conquest and which is not a appropriate term for describing a period of ca. 150 years) or subjugation (the famous "Ottoman yoke"), which for a long time served as key concepts of national historiographies in Southeastern Europe.

Conquest is understood as a multi-layered concept encompassing military history and its wider consequences. Its choice expresses the conviction that military history and the socio-cultural and political disruption caused by Ottoman warfare should return to the research agenda. In the context of fourteenth and fifteenth-century Ottoman history, military history or, more precisely, warfare, violence and its consequences has been rather neglected for many years, having earlier been the object of nationalist discourses for quite a long time in Balkan historiographies. When dealing with military history, Ottomanists are more interested in army organization, logistics and military technology than in the disrupting effects that military machinery provoked.[14] Analysing the Ottoman conquest however cannot begin after warfare had

[14] For recent scholarship in the field, cf. Pál Fodor, "Ottoman warfare, 1300–1453", in: *Cambridge History of Turkey* vol.1, pp. 192–226, Gábor Ágoston, "War-Winning weapons? On The Decisiveness of Ottoman Firearms from the Siege of Constantinople (1453) to the Battle of Mohács (1526)", *Journal of Turkish Studies* 39 (2013): pp. 129–143; for the post-conquest period, Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare 1500–1700* (London: UCL Press, 1999).

ended – warfare and its consequences are an essential part of the major social and cultural changes in the Balkans in the late Middle Ages.[15] To give just one example: the first larger number of Bosnians in Ottoman Anatolia were not refugees after 1878, but probably those Bosnian slaves who were sold at the slave market in Bursa after devastating Ottoman raids in Bosnia.[16]

These reflections have made clear one important element of this volume: Since the topic is so politically and emotionally loaded in many societies, historians cannot avoid keeping in mind this socio-political meta-level of their research. This does not mean that they should refrain from working on medieval history and restrict their interest to the analysis of scholarly discourses. This meta-level has however an enormous impact on the main goal of this volume, i.e. assessing approaches to and explanatory models for the Ottoman conquest, and therefore cannot be neglected or bypassed. Interpretative models do not emerge *ex nihilo*, but are based on previous research debates.

In order to structure the overview, it might be useful to ask which discussions have marked the developments in the field so far. It is certainly no exaggeration to state that Ottoman studies has a far more developed tradition of theoretical debate on this period than Byzantine and Balkan Medieval studies.[17] The latter in fact still focuses on mostly narrative approaches and small-detail research, and the question as to why these states fell is rarely asked – it seems that the scholarly mainstream took the fall of the Eastern Empire much more for granted than the fall of the Western Empire 1000 years earlier. In this perspective, Byzantium was doomed, and with it its Commonwealth in the Balkans.

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[15] Franz Babinger, "Der Quellenwert der Berichte über den Entsatz von Belgrad am 21./22. Juli 1456" in: Franz Babinger, *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen Südosteuropas und der Levante*, vol. 2 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1962), pp. 263–310; *Pad srpske despotovine 1459 g.,* edited by Momčilo Spremić (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 2011); *Stjepan Tomašević (1461.–1463.). Slom srednjovjekovnog Bosanskog Kraljestva*, edited by Ante Birin (Zagreb–Sarajevo: Hrvatski institut za povijest – Katolički bogoslovni fakultet u Sarajevu, 2013); *La conquista turca di Otranto (1480) tra storia e mito* 2 vols., edited by Hubert Houben (Galatina: Congedo, 2007–2008); Marija Barămova, *Evropa, Dunav i osmancite (1396–1541)* (Sofia: Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 2014).

[16] Anto Babić, *Društvo srednjovjekovne bosanske države. Prilozi za istoriju Bosne i Hercegovine. I. Društvo i privreda srednjovjekovne bosanke države* (Sarajevo: Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, 1987), pp. 21–83 (pp. 69–78); Konstantinos Moustakas, "Slave Labour in the Early Ottoman Rural Economy: Regional Variations in the Balkans during the 15th Century", in: *Frontiers of Ottoman Imagination. Studies in Honour of Rhoads Murphey*, edited by Marios Hadjianastasis (Brill: Leiden, 2015), pp. 29–43, p. 41 for the enslavement and deportation of Moreots between 1432 and 1454.

[17] Cf. Leslie Pierce, "Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries", *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 19/1 (2004): pp. 6–28.

Ottoman studies perceive the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as the period of the foundation and emergence of the Ottoman Empire. Territorial expansion is a crucial element of this process, but as such it too is rather taken for granted. Detailed descriptions of political and military events are much less the focus of research than structural history. Classical debates in the field concentrate a) on religion as a driving force of the conquest (the debate on Gaza and on conversion to Islam); b) the theory of accommodation (*istimalet*) as major tool for integrating the Orthodox (but not the Catholic) societies of the Balkans and the related debate on continuity or discontinuity of administrative structures; c) on demographic consequences of the conquest (catastrophe theory vs. demographic expansion; the question of Turkish and Yürük immigration).

a) Powerful theories and the scarcity of contemporary sources offer a fascinating contrast in the debate about the meaning of "*gazi*" and the importance of the religious dimension in the process of conquest, certainly the most important debate in Early Ottoman studies in the last ca. 90 years (cf. the contributions by Kiprovska and Krstić in this volume).[18] Like most classical debates in historiography, it reflects very much the *weltanschauung* of the

[18] Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London: B. Franklin, 1938); Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Recherches sur les actes des règnes des sultans Osman, Orkhan et Murad I.* (Munich: Societas academica dacoromana, 1967); Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "Les débuts: Osmân et Orkhân", in: *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman*, edited by Robert Mantran (Paris : Fayard, 1989), pp. 15–35; Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "L'installation des Ottomans", in: *La Bithynie au Moyen* Âge, edited by Bernard Geyer and Jacques Lefort (Paris : Lethellieux, 2003), pp. 351–374; Nicoară Beldiceanu, "L'organisation de l'Empire ottoman (XIVe-XVe siècles), in: Mantran, pp. 117–138; Halil İnalcik, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire 1300–1600* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1994); Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire 1300–1481* (Istanbul: Isis, 1990); Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire 1300–1650* (Basingstoke:Palgrave, [2]2009); Kemal Kafadar, *Between two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Rudi Paul Lindner, *Explorations in Ottoman Prehistory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); Rudi Paul Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia* (Bloomington: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies 1983); Ernst Werner, *Die Geburt einer Großmacht. Die Osmanen 1300–1481* (Vienna: Böhlau [4]1985) offers a Marxist perspective, but provides nevertheless thought-inspiring insights; Heath W. Lowry, *The Shaping of the Ottoman Balkans 1350–1500. The Conquest, Settlement & Infrastructural Development of Northern Greece* (Istanbul: Bahçeşehir University 2008); Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003); Machiel Kiel, "The Incorporation of the Balkans"; Linda Darling, "The Development of Ottoman Government Institutions in the Fourteenth Century: a Reconstruction", in: *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community*, edited by Vera Costantini and Markus Koller (Leiden-Boston: Brill 2008), pp. 17–34; Linda Darling, "Reformulating the Gazi narrative: When Was the Ottoman State a Gazi State?", *Turcica* 43 (2011): pp. 13–53.

scholars involved, from the influence of Stefan George´s "Kreis"[19] to Turkish nationalism of the pure Kemalist style, the political rehabilitation of Ottoman studies, Edward Saids Orientalism, post-modernism and recently the instrumentalization of the Ottoman past for Neo-Ottoman foreign policy.[20] Was the Jihad, the Islamic Holy War and the *gazis* as God's warriors at the core of the conquest (Paul Wittek's famous thesis[21]) – or is it more accurate to speak of plundering communities of Muslims and Christians under the leadership of the House of Osman and of regional *uc bey* dynasties well into the fifteenth century (Heath Lowry)?[22]

Research has demonstrated how difficult it is to use Ottoman chronicles, mostly dating from the end of the fifteenth century, to reconstruct the ideas of Ottoman warriors in the fourteenth century. Scholars such as Colin Imber radically dismiss the chronicles for scholarly purposes.[23] Linda Darling has recently proposed a differentiated model: while in the first half of the fourteenth century "Ottoman culture was formed from an amalgamation between Turkish/Seldjukid/Islamic and Byzantine/Christian influences", in the second half of the century "the eclecticism […] seems to have given way […] to a growth of popular Islam that may have been particularly powerful among the military forces in Europe […] If we are not simply to discard the concept of the Ottoman warriors as *gazis*, then perhaps it was in the second half of the century – not in the days of Osman – that that label became truly appropriate"[24]. After almost nine decades of debate, Ottoman studies still have not reached consensus on this crucial question.

There is no counterpart to this important debate in Balkan history, e.g. the impact of hesychasm on Orthodox political elites in the frame of the Ottoman conquest (this does not imply that the subject is not studied in de-

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[19] Colin Heywood, "Boundless Dreams of the Levant": Paul Wittek, the George-'Kreis', and the Writing of Ottoman History, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1989), pp. 32–50

[20] Partially analyzed in Peirce, "Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire", pp. 17–21, especially p. 19: "To a greater or lesser extent, almost all historians of the Early Ottoman period have been influenced by the Turkish nationalist historiographic project that began in earnest in the 1930s".

[21] Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London: B. Franklin, 1938).

[22] Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003); Heath W. Lowry, *The Shaping of the Ottoman Balkans;* Heath W. Lowry and İsmail E. Erünsal, *Notes & documents on the Evrenos Dynasty of Yenice-i Vardar (Giannitsa)* (Istanbul: Bahçeşehir University Press, 2009) especially pp. 5–40.

[23] Colin Imber, "The Ottoman Dynastic Myth", *Turcica* 19 (1987): pp. 7–27; Colin Imber, "The Legend of Osman Gazi", in: *The Ottoman Emirate (1300–1389),* edited by Elizabeth A. Zachariadou (Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 1997), pp. 67–76.

[24] Darling, "Development of Ottoman governmental institutions", pp. 32–33.

tail, but it is rarely linked with the question of Ottoman conquest).[25] There was almost no Orthodox counterpart to the Catholic Crusades, although there are hints that the Serbian rulers of Southern Macedonia, Uglješa and Vukašin, who visited Mount Athos before attacking Turkish forces at the Marica (1371), may have been inspired by the idea of religious warfare.[26] Byzantine intellectual and theological reactions to the Ottoman advance (most prominently those of Gregorios Palamas and Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos) that clearly reflect the religious dimension of the conquest have however been thoroughly researched by Byzantinists, while Steven Reinert offers an insightful interpretation of Manuel's treatise from an Ottomanist perspective. It is evident that for contemporary Byzantine intellectuals, who looked back on centuries of confrontation and cohabitation with Islamicate states, religion mattered, and they possessed the theological instruments to address the religious dimension of Ottoman expansion.[27] A Byzantine perspective that is contemporary to Early Ottoman history would certainly allow the Ottomanists to elaborate a nuanced view on the impact of religion in the early stages of the conquest process, long before Ottoman court chroniclers embarked on distorting the past in order to shape a unified narrative *ad maiorem Ottomanorum gloriam*.

b) *Istimalet*: Rapid conquest and the necessity of integrating subdued societies had not been a new experience in the Muslim world. The Ottomans could rely on Near Eastern state models when dealing with areas without any notable Muslim population. For more than a century scholars have debated the impact of the Balkano-Byzantine administrative heritage on the Ottoman state system. While regional scholars such as Nicolae Iorga

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[25] Eva Vries van der Felden, *L'élite byzantine devant l'avance turque à l'époque de la guerre civile de 1341 à 1354* (Amsterdam: Gieben 1989).

[26] Christo Matanov, "A Contribution to the Political History of South-Eastern Macedonia after the Battle of Cernomen", *Études balkaniques* 22 (1986): pp. 32–43; Rade Mihaljčić, "Les batailles de la Maritza et de Kosovo. Les dernières décennies de la rivalité serbobyzantine", in: *Byzantium and Serbia in the 14th Century* (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1995), pp. 97–109; Aleksandar Šopov, *'Falling like an autumn leaf': The Historical Visions of the Battle of the Maritsa/Meriç River and the Quest for a Place called Sirp Sindiği* (unpublished MA Thesis Sabancı University 2007) and the contribution by Toni Filiposki to this volume.

[27] Peter Schreiner, "Byzanz in der geistigen Auseinandersetzung mit den Osmanen", in: *Osmanen und Islam in Südosteuropa*, edited by Reinhard Lauer and Hans Georg Majer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2013), pp. 103–116; Stephen W. Reinert, "Manuel II Palaeologos and his Müderris", in: Stephen W. Reinert, *Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Studies* (Ashgate: Variorum, 2014) part IX, pp. 39–51; George G. Arnakis, "The Captivity of Gregory Palamas by the Turks and Related Documents as Historical Sources", *Speculum* 26 (1951): pp. 104–118.

insisted on an Orthodox-Ottoman symbiosis in which the Byzantine imperial tradition prevailed ("Byzance après Byzance"), Kemalist scholars such as Fuad Köprülü rejected any major Byzantine influence on Ottoman state building.[28] In recent decades, scholars have greatly refined the analysis, and the "symbiosis" theory has gained much ground.[29] "The fact that the Ottoman presence was little more than a thin coating superimposed over existing practices accounts for the relative ease with which their rule was accepted by peoples who shared littler in common with their new rulers", concludes Heath Lowry in his study of the Aegean island of Lemnos in the fifteenth century.[30]

c) There is consensus that the Ottoman conquest provoked considerable demographic change in the Balkans. Scholars hardly agree however in the way they emphasize particular elements of this complex process, their overall interpretations insisting either on the destruction of a demographic web or the repopulation of an area that, due to plague and warfare in the fourteenth century, was almost unhabited (cf. the contributions by Boykov and Krstić in this volume). Traditional Balkan historiography (e.g. in Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia) underlined demographic disruption, mass flight to mountain areas which became *nuclei* of resistance, deportation and general depopulation as a direct consequence of Ottoman warfare. The influx of Turkish settlers especially in the Eastern and Southern Balkans was interpreted as deliberate colonization. In this aspect, this interpretation meets a Turkish nationalist reading of demographic change: state controlled immigration of Turkophone Muslim settlers and seminomads (Yürüks). Ottomanists such as Machiel Kiel demonstrated for many regions

[28] This implies strong continuity and even symbiosis between Byzantium, the Orthodox Cultures of the Balkans and the Ottomans. In this symbiosis, Byzantium is the prevailing factor. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 23.

[29] Heath Lowry, *Fifteenth Century Ottoman Realities. Christian Peasant Life on the Aegean Island of Limnos* (Istanbul: Eren, 2002), pp. 1–2.

[30] Lowry, *Fifteenth Century Ottoman Realities* 176; there is a great wealth of scholarship on Early Ottoman administration; besides the publication of Lowry, for a summary of older research cf. Bistra A. Cvetkova, *Les institutions ottomanes en Europe* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1978); Rosica Gradeva, "Administrativna sistema i provincialno upravlenie v bălgarskite zemi prez XV vek", in: *Bălgarija prez XV vek* (Sofia 1993); Olga Zirojević, *Tursko vojno uređenje u Srbiji, 1459–1804* (Belgrad: Istorijski institut, 1974). The most recent debate is presented in Raúl Estanguï Gómez, *Byzance face aux Ottomans. Exercice du pouvoir et contrôle du territoire sous les derniers Paléologues (milieu XIVe – milieu du XVe siècle)* (Paris : Publications de la Sorbonne, 2014), pp. 456–463, in which the author challenges in cooperation with Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr the traditional interpretation that the Ottoman fiscal system did not borrow elements from Byzantine models; Thierry Ganchou, "Le prôtôgéros de Constantinople Laskaris Kanabès (1454). À propos d´une institution ottomane méconnue", *Revue des études byzantines* 71 (2013): pp. 209–258.

(Thessaly, Lokris, Bulgaria) that the traditional catastrophe theory cannot be upheld in its entirety, and that important parts of the Balkans had been affected by the general demographic crisis in Europe in the fourteenth century.[31] Recent research contradicts the idea of premeditated Turkish colonization and discusses the spontaneous influx of Muslims Turks from Anatolia (cf. the contribution by Krstić in this volume).[32] There is, moreover, extensive scholarship on the emergence of a new urbanistic landscape in Ottoman style.[33] As Grigor Boykov

[31] E.g. Machiel Kiel, "Yenice Vardar (Vardar Yenicesi-Giannitsa). A forgotten Turkish cultural centre in Macedonia of the 15th and 16th century", in: *Studia byzantina et neohellenica neerlandica* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), pp. 300–329; Machiel Kiel, *Art and Society of Bulgaria in the Turkish Period* (Assen – Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1985); Machiel Kiel, *Ottoman Architecture in Albania 1385–1912* (Istanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 1990); Machiel Kiel and Friedrich Sauerwein, *Ost-Lokris in türkischer und neugriechischer Zeit (1460–1981)* (Passau: Passavia, 1994); Machiel Kiel, "Das türkische Thessalien. Etabliertes Geschichtsbild versus osmanische Quellen", in: *Die Kultur Griechenlands in Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, edited by Reinhold Lauer und Peter Schreiner (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1996), pp. 109–196; Machiel Kiel, *Turco-Bulgarica. Studies on the history, settlement and historical demography of Ottoman Bulgaria* (Istanbul: Isis 2013); Konstantinos Mustakas, "E demographike krise tu ysteru mesaiona ston elleniko choro. E periptose tes notio-anatolikes Makedonias (14os – 15os ai.)", *Mnemon* 25 (2003): pp. 9–33.

[32] E.g. Evgenij Radušev, *Pomacite*. 2 vols. (Sofia: Narodna biblioteka na Bălgarija, 2008); Aleksej Kaljonski, *Jurucite* (Sofia: Prosveta, 2007); *Etnogeneza na Jurucite i nivnoto naseluvanje na Balkanot*, edited by Krum Tomovski (Skopje: Makedonska Akademija na Naukite i Umetnostite, 1986); Nikolay Antov, "The Ottoman State and Semi-Nomadic Groups along the Ottoman Danubian Serhad (Frontier Zone) in the Late 15th and the First Half of the 16th Centuries: Challenges and Politics", *Hungarian Studies* 27/2 (2013): pp. 219–235; Machiel Kiel, "Krieg und Frieden an der Unteren Donau. Siedlungsgeschichtliche und demographische Bemerkungen über die Kaza Zişţova – Svištov 1460–1878 anhand osmanischer administrativer Quellen", in: *Osmanen und Islam in Südosteuropa*, edited by Reinhard Lauer and Hans-Georg Majer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2014), pp. 285–301.

[33] Cf. the studies by Kiel (fn. 31); Machiel Kiel, *Un héritage non désiré: le patrimoine architectural islamique ottoman dans l'Europe du Sud-Est, 1370–1912* (Paris: Études balkaniques – Cahiers Pierre Belon, 2005) and recent publications by our contributor Grigor Boykov, *Tatar Pazardžik ot osnovavaneto na grada do kraja na XVII vek* (Sofia: Amicitia, 2008); Grigor Boykov, "Karlızâde Ali Bey: An Ottoman Dignitary's Pious Endowment and the Emergence of the Town of Karlova in Central Bulgaria", *Journal of Turkish Studies* 39 (2013): pp. 247–267; Grigor Boykov; "Architecture as a Symbol of Power: Some thoughts on the Ottoman Architectural Heritage of Plovdiv (Filibe)", in: *Power and Influence in Southeastern Europe, 16th–19th Centuries.*, edited by Maria Baramova et al. (Berlin: LIT, 2013), pp. 67–85; *Stenimachos – Stanimaka – Asenovgrad*, edited by Grigor Bojkov and Damjan Borisov (Asenovgrad: Dikov, 2014); Franz Babinger, "Die Gründung von Elbasan", in: Franz Babinger., *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte Südosteuropas und der Levante*, vol. 3 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1962), pp. 201–210; Aldo Gallotta, "Ilyas beg, i mütevelli e le origini di Corizza (Korçë/Görice)", in: *The Via Egnatia under Ottoman Rule*, edited by Elizabeth

demonstrates in his chapter of this volume, demographic consequences that were interpreted as negative by the elites of modern national states were and sometimes still are highly politicized. Scholars, especially in Ottoman studies, are therefore rather reluctant to assess the mass flight, deportation and enslavement of the Christian population.[34] Justified criticism of nationalist narratives has thus led directly to the other extreme: ignoring or underplaying demographic disruption caused by Ottoman warfare. Not all scarcely inhabited areas were depopulated by plague and warfare between Christian rulers however. The classical Ottoman strategy of constant raids on target areas had devastating consequences from Bithynia to Thrace, Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and Bosnia. As Grigor Boykov demonstrates in his contribution to this volume, it is almost impossible to quantify these changes. What we need at the present stage of research is a sober overview of all conquered areas.

The foundation of new towns such as Sarajevo and the demographic upheaval in Bosnia and Hercegovina are part of the same history, but usually they are not told together.[35] The same is true for the spectacular foundation of Elbasan or the history of Muslim Shkodra and the utter destruction of Scanderbeg's rebellious nearby heartland of Dibra and Mati, where almost 75% of the population did not survive the Ottoman onslaught – or the fact that the defenders of Shkodra preferred to emigrate to Venice and to continue their struggle against the Ottomans in the Venetian fleet or as settlers in Friuli rather than to submit to Otto-

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Zachariadou (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 1996), pp. 113–122; Bistra A. Cvetkova, *Vie économique de villes et ports balkaniques aux XVe et XVIe siècles* (Paris : Geuthner, 1970); Ferit Duka, *Berati në kohën osmane* (Tirana : Toena, 2001); Ferit Duka, *Shekujt osmane në hapësirën shqiptare* (Tirana: UET Press, 2007).

[34] Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr and Nicoară Beldiceanu, "Colonisation et déportation dans l'État ottoman (XIVe – début XVIe siècle)", in: *Coloniser au moyen* âge, edited by Michel Balard and Alain Ducellier (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1995), pp. 172–185; Elisabeth Zachariadou, Constantinople se repeuple, in: Elisabeth Zachariadou, Studies in Pre-Ottoman Turkey and the Ottomans (Aldershot: Variorum 2007), part. XXIII Zachariadou, Constantinople se repeuple pp. 49–55: Halil Inalcık, "The Policy of Mehmed II towards the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23/24 (1969/1970): pp. 231–249; Roads Murphey, Sürgün (T., lit. "expulsion"), in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, ²2010) (consulted online); Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "L'exil à Trébizonde d'une quarantaine de combattants albanais à la fin du XVe siècle", in: *Oi Albanoi sto Mesaiona*, edited by Charalampos Gasparis (Athens : National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1998), pp. 349–369 ; Skënder Rizaj, "Transferimet, deportimet dhe dyndjet e Shqiptarëvet në kohën e Skënderbeut", in: *Simpoziumi për Skënderbeun- Simpozium o Skenderbegu 9–12 maj 1969* (Prishtina/ Priština: Instituti albanologjik, 1969), pp. 145–153, Kiel, "Incorporation" pp. 150–151.

[35] Holm Sundhaussen, *Sarajevo* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2014); Milenko Krešić, "Depopulacija jugoistočne Hercegovine izazvana turskim osvajanjem", in *Hum i Hercegovina kroz povijest. Vol 1*, edited by Ivica Lučić (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2011), pp. 757–776.

man rule.[36] Ottomanist mainstream narratives show comparably little interest in those migration waves of Balkan Christians who crossed the borders to Christian states.[37] One may compare this state of the art with the two sides of a coin. Unfortunately, one-sided narratives are still powerful.

As mentioned above, in Byzantine and Late Medieval Balkan studies, theory building and theorey orientation are considerably weaker. Recent research has concentrated on the centenaries of key events, such as the fall of the Serbian Despotate (1459) or the Bosnian kingdom.[38] Explanations are given mostly for "national cases", and there are almost no attempts to link the Byzantine to the Bulgarian, Serbian, Bosnian, Herzegovinian, Croatian, Montenegrin or Albanian experience of conquest. Case studies for Bosnia and Albania have underlined however that the Bosnian crown and Scanderbeg both joined planned Papal crusades, and that the Papacy aimed at establishing two Catholic crusader kingdoms (the last Bosnian king actually received a crown from Pius II, while Scanderbeg seems to have accepted a similar promise). This radical change of confessional orientation in the Western Balkans prompted Mehmed's II harsh reaction in both regions (1463, 1466/1467).[39] Most scholarship is devoted to regional territorial lordships whose complexity and instability constitute a serious challenge for any specialist in the field.[40]

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[36] Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Skanderbeg* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2009) p. 102; Venice established a refugee office for Scutarine refugees which remained active even 40 years after Shkodra had been taken by the Ottomans; Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Das venezianische Albanien 1392–1479* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011), p. 628.

[37] There is a great wealth of scholarship produced e.g. by specialists in Venetian history: Ermanno Orlando, *Migrazioni mediterranee* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2014); Brunehilde Imhaus, *Le minoranze orientali a Venezia* (Rome: il Veltro, 1997); Alain Ducellier, *Les chemins de l´exil. Bouleversements de l´Est européen et migrations vers l'Ouest à la fin du Moyen* Âge (Paris: Colin 1992); Paolo Petta, *Despoti d'Epiro e principi di Macedonia. Esuli albanesi nell'Italia del Rinascimento* (Lecce: Argo, 2000); Paolo Petta, *Stradioti. Soldati albanesi in Italia* (Lecce. Argo, 1996); Lucia Nadin, *Migrazioni e integrazione. Il caso degli albanesi a Venezia (1479–1552)* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2008); cf. the recent monograph by Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire. Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World* (London: Allen Lane, 2015); for migrations to the Holy Roman Empire (Innerösterreich) cf. Ignacij Voje, "Migracioni procesi iz Bosne u slovenačkim zemljama za vrijeme turskih provala u 16. stoljeću". In: *Migracije i Bosna i Hercegovina* (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju u Sarajevu – Institut za proučavanje nacionalnih odnosa, 1990), pp. 89–99.

[38] *Pad srpske despotovine 1459 g.*; *Stjepan Tomašević (1461–1463*).

[39] Dubravko Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti. Sveta kruna ugarska i Sveta kruna bosanska 1387–1463* (Zagreb – Sarajevo: synopsis, 2006); Schmitt, *Skanderbeg* pp. 243–256; Emir Filipović, "Historiografija o padu Bosanskog Kraljestva", in Birin, *Stjepan Tomašević (1461.–1463.)* pp. 11–28.

[40] E.g. Sp. N. Asonites, *To Notio Ionio kata ton Opsimo Mesaiona* (Athens: Ergo, 2005); Donald M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros 1267–1479* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

Recently, Ottoman studies have joined this field with one of the most remarkable re-interpretations of Early Ottoman history (cf. the contribution by Kiprovska in this volume). Ottoman historiography and in its vein many Ottomanists depict a centralized Ottoman state apparatus right from the beginnings of the House of Osman. In recent years, interpretations put forward by Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr[41] since the 1960s have been taken up by several scholars, who conclude that even powerful rulers such as Bayezid I were rather *primi inter pares* among influential Muslim and Orthodox regional rulers in Anatolia and the Balkans.[42] Marcher lord dynasties such as the Mihaloğlu had an Orthodox background, and until Mehmed II started a process of centralization, the Balkans and Anatolia consisted of numerous regional vassal states of the Ottoman rulers. Marcher lordships often acted independently or in loose dependency on the Ottoman rulers.[43] Regional Orthodox rulers, but also major

1984); Pëllumb Xhufi, *Dilemat e Arbërit. Studime mbi Shqipërinë mesjetare* (Tirana: Pegi, 2006); Schmitt, *Das venezianische Albanien*; Ivan Božić, *Nemirno pomorje XV veka* (Belgrade: Srpska Književna Zadruga, 1979); George Ch. Soulis, *The Serbs and Byzantium During the Reign of Tsar Stephen Dušan (1331–1355) and his Successors* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984); Toni Filiposki, "Der Ohrider Župan Andrea Gropa", *Südost-Forschungen* 69/70 (2010/11): pp. 1–24; Rade Mihaljčić, *Kraj srpskog carstva* (Belgrade: SKZ, 1975); Hristo Matanov, "Radoslav Hlapen – souverain féodal en Macédoine méridionale durant le troisième quart du XIVe siècle", *Études balkaniques* 4 (1983): pp. 68–87; Elena Kostova, "Constantine Dragaš and his principality. According to unpublished source material from the archives of the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos", *Bulgaria mediaevalis* 2 (2011): pp. 685–695; Hristo Matanov, "West and Post-Byzantine Source Evidence about Krali Marko (King Marko)", *Études balkaniques* 1985/2, pp. 45–61; Aleksandra Fostikov, "O Dmitru Kraljeviću", *Istorijski časopis* 49 (2002): pp. 47–65; Jelena Mrgić-Radojčić, *Donji Kraj. Krajina srednjovekovne Bosne* (Belgrade: Filozofski fakultet, 2002); Jelena Mrgić, *Severna Bosna, 13.–16. vek* (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 2008).

[41] Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Recherches sur les actes;* Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "Les débuts: Osmân et Orkhân"; Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "L'installation des Ottomans"; and especially Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr and Raúl Estangüi Gómez, "Autour du document de 1386 en faveur de Radoslav Sablja (Şabya/Sampias): du beylicat au sultanat, étape méconnue de l'État ottoman", *Turcica* 45 (2014): pp. 159–186.

[42] Rhoads Murphey, "Bayezid I's Foreign Policy Plans and Priorities: Power Relations, Statecraft, Military Conditions and Diplomatic Practice in Anatolia and the Balkans", in: *Contact and Conflict in Frankish Greece and the Aegean, 1204–1453*, edited by Nikolaos G. Chrissis and Mike Carr (Farnham/Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 177–215.

[43] Lowry, *The Shaping of the Ottoman Balkans 1350–1500;* Lowry and Erünsal, *Notes & documents on the Evrenos Dynasty of Yenice-i Vardar (Giannitsa)*; Mariya Kiprovska, "Shaping the Ottoman Borderland. The Architectural Patronage of the Frontier Lords from the Mihaloğlu Family", in: *Bordering Early Modern Europe*, edited by Maria Baramova, Grigor Boykov and Ivan Parvev (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015), pp. 185–220; Mariya Kiprovska, "The Mihaloğlu Family: *Gazi* Warriors and Patrons of Dervish Hospices", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 32 (2008): pp. 173–202; Mariya Kiprovska, "Legends and Historicity: the Binbir Oğlu Ahmed

Catholic powers, often were confronted with Muslim regional rulers whose military strength did not surpass the power resources of Christian noblemen, unlike the Sultan's army. The political behaviour of regional Orthodox lords has to be re-interpreted in the light of the very fact that they sought to deal with Islamised strongmen with a regional background. Thorough monographs on these Marcher lordships are one of the most urgent tasks in the field.It has become clear from this necessarily sketchy overview that competing narratives have so far excluded a coherent interpretation of major socio-cultural and political processes. It is therefore imperative to analyse these narratives in more detail and to assess their impact on scholarly practices and discourses.

Historical interpretations indeed vary from the glorifying of a new Golden Age, the beginning of a new imperial era of peace, prosperity and tolerance[44] – sometimes depicted against the background of an allegedly intolerant, socially oppressive and politically fragmented Occident – and even liberation from national or religious oppression by neighbours (as in the case Bosnian-Muslim and Albanian-Muslim historiography[45]) to apocalyptic descriptions of destruction, violence, political and socio-cultural breakdown, a millenarian vision of catastrophe.[46]

Baba Tekkesi and its Founder", in: *Monuments, Patrons, Contexts. Papers on Ottoman Europe presented to Machiel Kiel*, edited by Maximilian Hartmuth and Ayşe Dilsiz (Leiden: Netherlands Institute for the Near East, 2010), pp. 29–45.

[44] Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*, p. 7: "Holy War was intended not to destroy but to subdue the infidel world, the dârülharb. The Ottomans established their empire by uniting Muslim Anatolia and the Christian Balkans under their rule and, although continuous Holy War was the fundamental principle of the state, the empire emerged, at the same time, as protector of the Orthodox Church and millions of Orthodox Christians. Islam guaranteed the lives and property of Christians and Jews, on the conditions of obedience and payment of a poll tax […] Furthermore, the protection of the peasantry as a source of tax revenue was a traditional polciy of the near-eastern state, and one which encouraged an attitude of tolerance […] The Ottoman Empire was thus to become a true 'Frontier Empire', a cosmopolitan state, treating all creeds and races as one, which was to unite the Orthodox Christinas Balkans and Muslim Anatolia in a single state."

[45] E.g. the "Kaleshi thesis" postulated by Hasan Kaleshi: "Das türkische Vordringen auf dem Balkan und die Islamisierung- Faktoren für die Erhaltung der ethnischen und nationalen Existenz des albanischen Volkes", in: *Südosteuropa unter dem Halbmond* (Munich: Trofenik, 1975), pp. 125–138; for a typical recent Bosniak interpretation, cf. the introduction in Ahmed S. Aličić, *Sumarni popis sandžaka Bosne iz 1468/69. godine* (Mostar: Islamski kulturni centar, 2008).

[46] E.g. *Historia e popullit shqiptar* vol. 1 (Tirana: Toena, 2002); Dessislava Lilova , "Relater la chute sous le pouvoir ottoman : la version bulgare", *Balkanologie* , 12/1 (2010) http://balkanologie.revues.org/index2140.html; Antonina Zhelyazkova, "Islamization in the Balkans as a Historiographical Problem: the Southeast-European Perspective", in: *The Ottomans and the Balkans*, edited by Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 223–266;

The first narrative is often encountered in Ottomanist, Bosniak and Albanian-Muslim historiographies, the latter in historiographies of Balkan Christian successor states of the Ottoman Empire. Between these extremes of white and black (which for the sake of our argument are presented here in a rather pointed way), there are numerous varieties of grey; there is no single interpretation by those whose ancestors eventually "won", nor by those whose forefathers were defeated. Modern Serbian, Bulgarian, Croatian (in Bosnia: also Bosnian Catholic) and Albanian (secular-nationalist and Christian) narratives are far from homogenous, nor has there been a common Balkan Muslim narrative.[47] Most interpretations have in common a lack of contextualization in the sense that many authors rarely define their own theoretical and, more importantly, ideological standpoint, although they mostly, consciously or subconsciously, pursue goals related to their *weltanschauung*. Balkan national historiographies have been much criticized because of their predominantly negative view on Ottoman conquest and more generally on Ottoman rule in the Balkans. This criticism however has in recent years unfortunately become part of official Turkish foreign policy exercising pressure on several Balkan states to change chapters on Ottoman history in school textbooks.[48] Much of the scholarly criticism was

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cf. the contribution by Grigor Boykov in this volume with a bibliography on the Bulgarian case, especially the Gandev theory.

[47] For representative examples of Croatian medieval studies, cf. Tomislav Raukar, *Hrvatsko srednjovjekovlje* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1997) (a masterpiece of balanced scholarship) and *Povijest Hrvata. vol.1. Srednji vijek*, edited by Franjo Šanjek (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2003).

[48] Critical approaches to national historiographies became an object of predilection for many scholars after 1989; cf. *Klio ohne Fesseln? Historiographie im östlichen Europa nach dem Zusammenbruch des Kommunismus*, edited by Arnold Suppan et al. (Vienna: Peter Lang, 2003); *Narratives Unbound. Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, edited by Sorin Antohi, Balász Trencsényi, Péter Apor (Budapest – New York: CEU Press, 2007); *(Re)Writing History. Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism,* edited by Ulf Brunnbauer (Münster: LIT, 2004), pp. 165–200; Wolfgang Höpken, "Zwischen 'Klasse' und 'Nation': Historiographie und ihre Meistererzählungen in Südosteuropa in der Zeit des Sozialismus (1944–1990)", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte und Kultur Südosteuropas* 2 (2000): pp. 15–60; *Beruf und Berufung. Geschichtswissenschaft und Nationsbildung in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert,* edited by Hans Christian Maner and Markus Krzoska (Münster: LIT, 2005); Nenad Stefanov, *Wissenschaft als nationaler Beruf. Die Serbische Akademie der Wissenschaften 1944–1992. Tradierung und Modifizierung nationaler Ideologie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2011); for Turkish government pressure cf. in the case of Kosova cf. http://www.telegrafi.com/lajme/qeveria-pro-ndryshimit-te-historise-2-16944.html (11.9.2011; accessed on 1st May 2015; http://shqiptarja.com/kosova/2727/turqia-kerkon-te-rehabilitoje-osmanet-ne-historine-e-kosoves-149245.html (27.3.2015; accessed on 1st May 2015); for a comparable intervention in Albania http://www.shekulli.com.al/p.php?id=24691 (10.6.2013; accessed on 1 May 2015); http://gazeta55.al/historia-mesuese-e-jetes-apo-liber-i-paragjykimeve-drejt-konflikteve%C2%94/ (2.4.2013;

certainly justified – e.g. of the politicization of Bulgarian Ottoman studies in the so-called Rebirth process, i.e. the forced Bulgarisation of Bulgarian Turks in the second half of the 1980s,[49] and many historians in Balkan countries have adopted much more sophisticated and better balanced perspectives.[50] Balkan Ottomanists who had in some countries at least partially contributed to a politicized distortion of Ottoman history started after 1989 a process of critical self-reflection; this is especially true for Bulgarian and Albanian Ottoman studies[51] – while in Bosnia Ottoman studies underwent a process of politicization in the 1990s because of their importance for the Bosniak nation- and state-building.[52] Extra-regional Ottoman studies, however, has so far not undergone a similar process of self-reflection. While institutions and single actors in Balkan national historiographies and the scholarly discourses produced by them have been analyzed in detail, extra-regional Ottoman studies obviously feels no need to start a similar process of questioning its own theoretical models, terminology, possible biases and its closeness or distance to political agencies.[53] Many

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accessed on 1May 2015); http://www.panorama.com.al/korrigjimi-i-historise-136-intelektuale-peticion-kunder-nderhyrjes-se-turqise/ (29.3.2015, accessed on 1 May 2015); in 2013 more than 100 Albanian intellectuals signed a petition against changes to school textbooks for which the Turkish government had been pushing.

[49] There is an impressive amount of critical scholarship in Bulgaria on that topic, cf. source collections: *Strogo poveritelno! Asimilatorskata kampanija sreštu turskoto nacionalno malcinstvo v Bălgarija (1984–1989). Dokumenti*, edited by Veselin Angelov (Sofia: Simolini 2008), *"Văzroditelnijat proces". Meždunarodni izmerenija (1984–1989),* edited by Iskra Baeva (Sofia: Dăržavna agencija Archivi, 2009); Valeri Stojanov, *Turskoto naselenie v Bălgarija meždu poljusite na etničeskata politika* (Sofia: LIK, 1998); Mihail Gruev and Aleksej Kaljonski, *Văzroditelnijat proces* (Sofia: Ciela, 2008).

[50] In the oeuvre of leading medievalists who were never involved in a politicized discourse, 1989 did not constitute a break. This is e.g. true for the eminent Serbian medievalist Sima Ćirković, cf. his collected articles *Rabotnici, vojnici, duhovnici. Društva srednjovekovnog Balkana* (Belgrade: Equilibrium 1997).

[51] Dritan Egro, *Historia dhe ideologjia. Një qasje kritike studimeve osmane në historiografinë moderne shqiptare (nga gjysma e dytë e shek. XIX deri me sot)* (Tirana: Maluka, 2007); Elena Grozdanova, "Bulgarian Ottoman Studies at the Turn of Two Centuries: Continuity and Change", *Études balkaniques* 2005/3, pp. 93–146.

[52] Cf. the 1991 issue of *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 41 (1991); a typical Bosniak nationalist interpretation is offered by Mehmedalija Bojić, *Historia Bosne i Bošnjaka* (Sarajevo: TKD Šahinagić, 2001); on Ottoman Bosnia cf. *Ottoman Bosnia. A History in Peril*, edited by Markus Koller/Kemal Karpat (Madison/Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

[53] Speros Vryonis, Jr., *The Turkish State and History. Clio meets the Grey Wolf* (Thessaloniki: The Institute for Balkan Studies, 1991) analyses Turkish state strategies of influence on the American academic community and the compliance of leading American specialists in Ottoman history with demands by the Turkish state in very sensitive issues such as the Armenian genocide. However, there is still no thorough analysis of scholarly networks sponsored by the Turkish state with the aim of influencing scientific narratives. Related networks of scholars

actors in the field still cultivate not a neutral, but a predominantly positive image of the Ottoman Empire that is of course no less exposed to ideologies and extra-scientific concepts than politicized interpretations of Balkan national historiographies.

The attempt to revise nationalist stereotypes in Balkan historiographies may also lead to equally problematic interpretations that downplay warfare, violence and mass destruction or virtually "cut out" the "other" from research and master narratives. The reasons are certainly manifold. They are at least partially a reaction to traditional narratives of national historiographies (the "Turkish yoke"), which depicted a caricature of Asian bloodthirsty Turkish invaders who had nothing to do to with the Christian civilisation that they ruthlessly destroyed. Violence and death are however unavoidable consequences of warfare, and this is even the more true for processes of conquest that stretch over several decades or even more than a century (in the case of Bosnia, from the 1380s until the 1530s, or in the case of Albania from the 1380s to the 1480s) and for an Empire whose *raison d´être* was for centuries territorial expansion, i.e. conquest. In fact, leading textbooks by Ottomanists tend to marginalize violence and to focus rather on the technique and logistics of warfare in the period of conquest.[54] This "buffered" narrative of conquest is contrasted by an impressive body of scholarship on Muslim victims of Balkan Christian violence at the end of the Empire.[55] The latter is a good example of a victimization discourse; the former reflects an uncritical approach to the beginnings of the Ottoman state. There is therefore not a general reluctance in Ottoman studies to address violence as a historical phenomenon, but to name Muslims as perpetrators and

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with a mostly Western Balkan (Albanian and Bosniak) background teaching and publishing at US and European academic institutions would also require an in-depth analysis (cf. below fn. 55).

[54] E.g. *The Cambridge History of Turkey* vol.1; İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire*; Klaus Kreiser and Christoph Neumann, *Kleine Geschichte der Türkei* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2003) which however provides (on p. 86) a multiperspectival interpretation of the battle on the Kosovo polje in 1389.

[55] Examples of a politicized interpretation of Late Ottoman history are Isa Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800–1912* ((New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2011), who idealizes the late Ottoman Empire while ascribing all the blame for its failure to European Great Powers; Justin Mc Carthy, *Death and Exil: the Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995); *War & Nationalism. The Balkan Wars, 1912–1913, and their Sociopolitical Implications*, edited by M. Hakan Yavuz and Isa Blumi (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2013); cf. the critical review by Dietmar Müller in hsozkult (http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/index.asp?id=21657&view=pdf&pn=rezensionen&type=rezbuecher, accessed on 14 May 2015); this book is being distributed by Turkish embassies directly to supposed opinion-makers at universities. It is no coincidence that some of these authors are involved in downplaying the Armenian Genocide.

Christians as victims of violence, a perspective running contrary to current political correctness. As nationalism in the Balkans contributed to dark myths of Ottoman rule, Turkish nationalism and the rise of Islamist movements equally distort scholarly perspectives. While scholars in Balkan countries felt they were obliged or indeed were obliged to address this dimension of their research, extra-regional Ottomanists do not openly discuss various forms of pressure or self-censorship. This discrepancy has to be addressed in academia in order to overcome clichés and prejudices that still linger sometimes unconsciously in disciplinary discourses.

Ottomanist mainstream narratives concentrate on enumerating battles, conquered fortresses and kingdoms and rather seldom invest much scholarly energy in investigating the "other", i.e. those who did not surrender and were eventually defeated.[56] Violence and terror as a means of warfare is equally seldom addressed explicitly by Ottomanists, but often constitutes an important element of narratives by specialists in Mediterranean and Balkan studies. There is to my knowledge no Ottomanist narrative that mentions that some of Scanderbeg's followers committed suicide out of despair (a fact recorded by the Ottoman court historiographer Critobulos).[57] Heath Lowry lists some of the massacres committed by Mehmed II during his campaign in Morea, but in an overall perspective, discussion of mass violence and terror as a tactical instrument is conspicuously lacking in the Ottomanist mainstream discourse. The reaction to this deliberate silence should certainly not be an updated list of "Ottoman atrocities", but an assessment of the demographic, political and socio-cultural consequences of Ottoman warfare.

Another sensitive issue is the accommodation policy – *istimalet* – of the Ottoman elites towards their new subjects. It is usually described as a key to Ottoman success in rapidly conquered territories.[58] After decades of meticulous

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[56] E.g. the influential synthesis by Kreiser and Neumann, *Kleine Geschichte* pp. 81–98, describing the whole process from an (implicitly) Ottoman standpoint.

[57] Schmitt, *Skanderbeg* p. 102.

[58] Halil İnalcık, "Timariotes chrétiens en Albanie au 15e siècle", *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 4 (1952): 118–138; Hasan Kaleshi, "Die Albaner in Kosovo im 15. Jahrhundert", in: *Akten des internationalen albanologischen Kolloquiums in Innsbruck 1972 zum Gedächtnis an Norbert Jokl*, edited by Hermann Ölberg (Innsbruck: AMOE, 1977), pp. 513–524; Nicoară Beldiceanu – Irène Beldiceanu–Steinherr, "Recherches sur la Morée (1461–1512)", *Südost-Forschungen* 39 (1980): pp. 17–74; Nicoară Beldiceanu, "Timariotes chrétiens en Thessalie (1454/55)" *Südost-Forschungen* 45 (1985): pp. 45–81; Aleksandar Matkovski, *Nomadskoto stočarstvo vo Makedonija od XIV do XIX vek* (Skopje: Makedonska akademija na naukite i umetnostite, 1996); Aleksandar Stojanovski, *Dervendžistvoto vo Makedonija* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1974); Aleksandar Stojanovski, *Raja so specijalni zadolženija vo Makedonija (vojnuci, sokolari, orizari i solari)* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1990); Aleksandar Stojanovski, *Makedonija pod turskata vlast (Statii i drugi*

research in this field, there is no doubt that Orthodox Christians of all social strata joined the Ottoman military and administrative apparatus and played an essential role in Ottoman expansion in Europe, the Near East and Northern Africa.

Heath Lowry, a leading specialist in the field, circumscribed *istimalet* with the trivialising metaphor of "stick and carrot".[59] There are however very few Ottomanists who are interested in analysing in detail what the "stick" really meant for those who refused the "carrot" (which is not true for Lowry himself, who gave some examples of Ottoman massacres in Morea).

Since Ottoman sources reproduce the perspective of the "winning side", a more balanced interpretation would be gained from careful reflection on the discourses these sources contain not only relating to the Ottomans, their state and their policy (cf. the discussion on the "Barkan" and the "Köprülü" thesis in the contribution by Krstić in this volume), but also concerning those whose lands were conquered and their perspectives.[60] Scholars emphasizing *istimalet* and patterns of Ottoman-Balkan symbiosis obviously study those parts of the Christian population who had survived the Ottoman onslaught and had not sought shelter outside the Ottoman territory. This very basic fact has to be made plain. They usually omit destruction, mass flight movements within the Balkans and to the Danubian principalities, Hungary, Italy and the Holy Roman Empire (which play, however, an important – and often distorted – role in Albanian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Greek, and Serbian national historiographies). While Ottomanists underline the readiness of Balkan Christians to integrate into the Ottoman military and administrative system, traditional national historiographies insist on various forms of resistance.[61] Ottomanists are

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prilozi) (Skopje: Institut za nacionala istorija, 2006), Metodija Sokoloski, "Osvrt na sastav stanovništva zapadne Makedonije u XV i XVI veku", *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis* 1970/1–2, 9–40; Dragi Ġorġiev, *Naselenieto vo makedonsko – albanskiot graničen pojas* (Skopje: Institut za nacionala istorija, 2009); Dragi Ġorġiev, „Siedlungsverhältnisse im makedonisch-albanischen Grenzgebiet im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert (nach osmanischen Quellen)", *Südost-Forschungen* 65/66 (2006/2007): pp. 87–116.

[59] Heath Lowry in *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey*, edited by Metin Heper and Sabri Sayarı (Abingdon – New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 11; Lowry, *Fifteenth Century Ottoman Realities*, p. 3.

[60] Bedriye Atsız, "Das Albanerbild der Türken nach osmanischen Chroniken des 15.–16. Jahrhunderts", *Münchner Zeitschrift für Balkankunde* 1 (1978): pp. 15–25.

[61] Olga Katsiardi-Hering, "Von den Aufständen zu den Revolutionen christlicher Untertanen des Osmanischen Reiches in Südosteuropa (ca. 1530–1821). Ein Typologisierungsversuch", *Südost-Forschungen* 68 (2009): pp. 96–137; Aleksandar Matkovski, *Otporot vo Makedonija vo vremeto na turskoto vladeenje*. 4 vols. (Skopje: Misla, 1983); Peter Bartl, *Der Westbalkan zwischen spanischer Monarchie und osmanischen* Reich (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1974).

interested in migration within the Empire (e.g. Yürüks, Vlachs[62]), but less in migration as a consequence of decades of Ottoman raids and ultimate conquest. Demographic history is certainly one of the most loaded issues in Balkan history and the kind of divided history that currently prevails does not contribute to filling this gap.

The recent *Cambridge History of Turkey*, a representative endeavour of extra-regional Ottoman studies, summarizes the chapter on "the incorporation of the Balkans into the Ottoman Empire" with the statement that until 1912 the Balkans east of a line stretching from Nikopol to Kavala was as Turkish as Anatolia, adding that "the comprehensive work of how much of the Balkans became truly Turkish will take a long time to be written"[63]. The author, Machiel Kiel, a leading scholar in the field of demographic history and the history of architecture who in recent decades has contributed signficantly to our knowledge of the early Ottoman Balkans,[64] does not explain however how Turkish Anatolia was in 1912 – before the Armenian and Assyrian genocide and the flight, expulsion, population exchange and eventually pogroms which reduced the Orthodox population – nor does he define what the term Turkish means in the fifteenth and the early twentieth centuries. The text unfortunately, but not untypically,[65] mixes Late Medieval history with the traumatic last decades of the Ottoman Empire. It furthermore constructs a millenarian Pre-Ottoman Turkish Balkan by mingling Kutrigurs, Onogurs, Kumans and even Székler and does not explain that many of these groups were Christianized and that they did not support Ottoman expansion. On the contrary, the Székler community in Transylvania served as a bulwark against Ottoman raiders[66] and the Gagauz communities are characterized by the very fact that they

[62] Nicoară Beldiceanu, "Les Roumains des Balkans dans les sources ottomans", *Revue des* études *ro*umaines 19/20 (1995/96): pp. 7–21; Nicoară Beldiceanu, "Sur les Valaques des Balkans slaves à l´époque ottoman", *Revue des* études *islamiques* 34 (1966): pp. 83–132; Nicoară Beldiceanu/Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr/Petre S. Năsturel, "Les recensements ottomans effectués en 1477, 1519 et 1533 dans les provinces de Zvornik et d'Herzégovine" *Turcica* 20 (1988): pp. 159–171.

[63] Kiel, "The Incorporation of the Balkans". 156.

[64] E.g. Kiel, *Art and Society of Bulgaria in the Turkish Period*; Kiel, *Ottoman Architecture in Albania 1385–1912*; Kiel, "Das türkische Thessalien. Etabliertes Geschichtsbild versus osmanische Quellen"; Machiel Kiel, *Turco-Bulgarica. Studies on the History, Settlement and Historical Demography of Ottoman Bulgaria* (Istanbul: Isis 2013).

[65] For the instrumentalisation of Western scholars by deniers of the Armenian genocide cf. http://www.tc-america.org/scholar/scholar.html and http://www.mfa.gov.tr/controversy-between-turkey-and-armenia-about-the-events-of-1915.en.mfa (accessed on 5 May 2015).

[66] *Die Szekler in Siebenbürgen. Von der privilegierten Sondergemeinschaft zur ethnischen Gruppe*, edited by Harald Roth (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009).

never embraced Islam even though they were Turkish speakers.[67] Distortion of facts and a primordial vision of ethnicity are usually seen as typical of Balkan historiographies, but unfortunately they also exist in extra-regional Ottoman studies. The very fact that the first volume of this prestigious series contains a chapter on Byzantium (1071–1453) as a mere prehistory of the Ottoman Empire is telling. Since the editor does not provide an introduction to the volume, her scholarly programme remains unclear.

Even scholars who do their best to avoid these traps often do not reflect on how much they stick to disciplinary traditions (including the author of these lines). A Byzantinist, a Balkan Medievalist and an Ottomanist inevitably will write different histories of this period, and these differences are often source-driven. In fact, cross-reading of sources occurs only partially, and disciplinary and philological pride frequently constitute a serious barrier for discussion. One may discern several *nuclei* of communication: cross-reading of Byzantine and Latin/Italian sources has been established since the nineteenth century. Cross-reading of Ottoman and Byzantine sources characterizes a small but influential group of scholars (e.g. Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr – also together with Raúl Estanguï Gómez –, Elizabeth Zachariadou, Nevra Necipoğlu, and Stephen W. Reinert) .[68]

Latin sources are used by Ottomanists with strong Mediterranean research interests such as Marie-Matilde Alexandrescu-Dersca,[69] Elizabeth Zachariadou or Nicolas Vatin. Combining Ottoman and Slavonic sources is a particular skill of regional scholars dealing with continental parts of the Balkans. The highly complex but necessary cross-reading of all text cultures rarely occurs however. Things are at least equally complicated where Balkan national historiographies are concerned. Only few extra-regional Ottomanists read Balkan languages;

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[67] Olga Radova, "The problem of the Gagauz Ethno-Demographic Development in the 19th Century", *Südost-Forschungen* 54 (1995): pp. 263–279, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Gagauz were even forced to migrate to Black Sea areas under Russian control (pp. 264–265).

[68] Estanguï Gómez, *Byzance face aux Ottomans*; Nevra Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins. Politics and Society in the Late Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). For decades Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr has contributed to this interdisciplinary dialogue between Ottoman, Balkan and Byzantine studies: cf. e.g. Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "Pachymère et les sources orientales", *Turcica* 32 (2000): pp. 425–434; Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr and Boško Bojović, "Le traité de paix conclu entre Vlatko et Mehmed II", *Balcanica* 24 (1993): pp. 75–86 and her recent article, Beldiceanu-Steinherr and Raúl Estangüi Gómez, "Autour du document de 1386 en faveur de Radoslav Sablja (Şabya/Sampias)".

[69] Marie-Matilde Alexandrescu Dersca Bulgaru, *Seldjoukides, Ottomans et l'espace roumain* (Istanbul: Isis, 2006); Marie M. Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La campagne de Timur en Anatolie (1402)* (second edition London: Variorum, 1997).

and even between regional Ottoman studies, the exchange is still rather modest. National schools prevail. If we bear in mind these communication problems within Ottoman studies, it becomes evident that the complexity increases rapidly when Byzantine, Eastern Mediterranean and Late Medieval Balkan studies are involved whose results are published in French, Italian, German, Albanian, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Bulgarian, Modern Greek, Macedonian, Romanian, Turkish, Russian and English.

Language obstacles are daunting, but sub-disciplinary mental barriers are even more powerful: the Danube still constitutes such an imagined frontier, separating e.g. Romanian and Bulgarian scholarship. The tradition of Romanian historiography on the Danubian principalities, the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean (contributions by Cristea, Gorovei/Székely and Pippidi in this volume) is therefore represented in this volume along with representatives of the Bulgarian school of Ottoman studies (contributions by Kiprovska and Boykov). Romanian scholarship in Black Sea studies is particularly important and has so far been rather neglected by Ottomanists.[70] The field becomes even more complicated if Eastern Mediterranean, Crusading and Eastern Central European studies are taken into consideration. In fact, it is impossible to dismiss them, not only because of the importance of sources in Latin and the Italian and German vernacular. The entire Northern Balkans from Bosnia to Serbia and Northeast Bulgaria (Vidin) as well as the Romanian principalities constituted between the 1380s and, in the case of Northwestern Bosnia, the 1530s a contested puffer zone between Muslim Marcher lords and the Sultans and the Kingdom of Hungary. The maritime zone stretching from the Central Aegean up to Northern Dalmatia was conceived as a Venetian *cordon sanitaire* against Ottoman expansion into the Aegean, Ionian and Adriatic Seas. As Andrei Pippidi and Maria Magdalena Székely/Ştefan S. Gorovei argue in this volume, Hungarian backing was essential for the Romanian principalities that manoeuvred between Ottoman pressure and Hungarian (and Polish) pretensions to hegemony in the Danubian and South Pontic area. Hungarian rulers such as Lewis the Great, Sigismund of Luxemburg, Ladislaus, John Hunyadi and finally Matthias Corvinus pursued offensive strategies in the Balkans which turned especially Bosnia into a fiercely contested battleground between the two great powers in the Balkans, Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. John Hunyadi

[70] Şerban Papacostea, *Marea Neagră: puteri maritime – puteri terestre (sec. XIII–XVIII)* (Bucharest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2006); Georges Brătianu, *La mer noire, des origines à la conquête ottomane* (Munich : Societas academica dacoromana, 1969); Ovidiu Cristea, *Veneţia şi Marea Neagră în secolele XIII–XIV* (Brăila: Muzeul Brăilei, 2004); Ştefan Andreescu, *Din istorii Mării Negre: genovezi, români şi tatari în spaţiul pontic în secolele XIV–XVII* (Bucharest: Editură enciclopedică, 2001).

even aimed at destroying Ottoman power in Europe twice and stirred up rebellions of Orthodox Christians in the Central Balkans (1443/44, 1448).[71] After the battle of Mohács (1526) especially Moldavia was exposed to unbearable pressure.

Studies on the two regional Christian great powers, Hungary and Venice, are seldom linked, and the triangle of power – Ottoman-Venetian-Hungarian – complicated by regional vassal states with shifting loyalties is yet to be investigated thoroughly. Ovidiu Cristea makes the importance of Venetian history in this regional context very clear. While Ottomanists have relied heavily on Venetian sources, this is true especially sixteenth-century Mediterranean studies,[72] the Veneto-Ottoman wars in the fifteenth century have long been rather neglected. There is for instance still no full-scale history of the protracted and decivise long war of 1463–1479,[73] and while Ottoman-Venetian relations have been the subject of much investigation, their regional and local implications are usually overlooked.[74] There are several monographs on relations between Ven-

[71] Ferenc Szakály, "Phases of Turco-Hungarian warfare before the Battle of Mohács (1365–1526)", *Acta orientalia Academiae scientiarum Hungaricae* 33/1 (1979): pp. 65–111; Jörg K. Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund. Herrscher an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit 1368–1437* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1996); Elemér Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund in Ungarn 1387–1437* (Budapest: Akádemiai kiadó, 1990); Wolfgang Stromer von Reichenbach, "Die Schwarzmeer- und Levantepolitik Sigismunds von Luxemburg und der Schwarzmeer-Handel oberdeutscher und hansischer Handelshäuser 1385–1453", *Bulletin de l'Institut belge de Rome* 44 (1974): pp. 601–610; Şerban Papacostea, "The Black Sea in the Political Strategies of Sigismund of Luxemburg", in: *Church Union and Crusading in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, edited by Christian Gastgeber et al. (Cluj-Napoca: Center for Transylvanian Studies, 2009), pp. 279–290; Gyula Rászó, "Die Türkenpolitik Matthias Corvinus'", *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 32 (1986): pp. 3–50; Jörg K. Hoensch, *Matthias Corvinus. Diplomat, Feldherr und Mäzen* (Graz 1998); Matthias Corvinus und seine Zeit, edited by Christian Gastgeber et al. (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 2011); *Extincta est lucerna orbis. John Hunyadi and His Time*, edited by Ana Dumitran et al. (Cluj-Napoca: Center for Transylvania Studies, 2009); Dubravko Lovrenović, "Bitka u Lašvi 1415. godine", in: *Raukarov zbornik*, edited by Neven Budak (Zagreb : FF Press, 2005), pp. 275–295; Neven Isailović and Aleksandar Jakovljević, "Šah Melek (prilog istoriji turskih upada u Bosna, 1414. i 1415 godine)", in: *Spomenika Sima* Ćirkovića, edited by Srđan Rudić (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 2011), pp. 441–463.

[72] E.g. Suraiya Faroqhi, *Another Mirror for Princes* (Istanbul: Isis, 2008); cf. the recent synthesis by Maria Pia Pedani, *Venezia porta d'Oriente* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2010).

[73] The best accounts are still Franz Babinger, *Mehmed der Eroberer* (reedition Munich: Piper, 1987); and Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1978).

[74] Malcolm, *Agents of Empire* provides an example of how to link these elements. Oliver Jens Schmitt, "Contrabannum. Der adriatisch-balkanische Schmuggel im ausgehenden Mittelalter", *Südost-Forschungen* 67 (2008): pp. 1–26 investigates arms smuggling from Venetian Dalmatia to Ottoman Morea in 1463.

ice and major Balkan principalities, but they generally provide a bilateral, not a multilateral regional history.[75] Studies have often ignored the fact that Venice's hegemony in the Adriatic area was seriously challenged by the Kingdom of Naples, especially under Alfons V and his son Ferrante. Naples erected a system of vassals on the Eastern shore of the Adriatic stretching from the Morea up to Herzegovina. Venice and Naples fought a proxy war in the Western Balkans which was partially interwoven with the Veneto-Hungarian competition for hegemony. In the end, it did enormous damage to regional Christian rulers with an anti-Ottoman tendency, such as Scanderbeg, who was virtually squeezed between Venice and his suzerain in Naples.[76]

Major disciplinary approaches have a strong impact on narrative strategies and methodological preconceptions: for Ottomanists, the period Western Medievalists call the Late Middle Ages is a quasi-natural starting point, for Byzantinists and Balkan Medievalists the obvious end point.[77] Narrative strategies vary considerably if a scholar embarks on telling the beginning of a story or if he approaches the end of the field of his interest. The consequences for the choice of terminology are obvious: are Byzantium or the Medieval Balkans a valuable subject of research, or are they simply a pre-history to what really matters? The term "Pre-Ottoman period" for Byzantium would be such an example (as for instance in volume 1 of the *Cambridge History of Turkey*, which uses the reductive term in a rather unreflected way). Historians of the Orthodox Commonwealth thought in similar categories: what Ottomanists

[75] Marko Šunjić, *Bosna i Venecija.* 2nd. edition (Sarajevo: Napredak, 1996); Ruža Ćuk, *Srbija i Venecija u XIII i XIV veku* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1986); Momčilo Spremić, *Srbija i Venecija (vek)* (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2014); Schmitt, *Das venezianische Albanien.*

[76] Constantin Marinesco, "Alphonse V, roi d'Aragon et de Naples, et l'Albanie de Skanderbeg", *Mélanges de l'École Roumaine en France* 1 (1923) pp. 1–135 ; Constantin Marinescu, *La politique orientale d'Alfonse V d'Aragon, roi de Naples (1416–1458)* (Barcelona : Institut d'estudis catalans, 1994), Francisc Pall, "I rapporti italo-albanesi alla metà del secolo XV", *Archivio storico per le provincie napoletane seria III.* 4 (1965): pp. 123–226, Alfred Ryder, *Alfonso the Magnanimous. King of Aragon, Naples and Sicily, 1396–1458* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990); Momčilo Spremić, "Vazali kralja Alfonsa Aragonskog", *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu* 12 (1974): pp. 455–469.

[77] Cf. classic monographs such as Steven Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople 1453* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1965); Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium* (London: Hart-Davis 1972), for an assessment of interpretations in Byzantine studies cf. Klaus-Peter Matschke, "Research Problems Concerning the Transition to Tourkokratia: the Byzantinist Standpoint", in: *The Ottomans and the Balkans*, edited by Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden: Brill 2002), pp. 79–113 and the recent monograph by Michael Angold, *The Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans: Context and Consequences* (Harlow: Routledge, 2012).

call the Ottoman "Classical Age"[78] can also be written as Post-Byzantine History, as "Byzance après Byzance" (Nicolae Iorga),[79] both terms and concepts avoiding the term "Ottoman", as "pre-Ottoman" omits the Byzantine heritage (the recent concept of Ottoman Orthodoxy constitutes therefore an important step forward).[80]

Narratives of end and catastrophe: National historiographies of those modern national states – such as Bulgaria, Serbia, or Croatia – which legitimize modern statehood with the splendour of a remote medieval past perceive the late Middle Ages as a period of political and cultural glory that was forcefully and violently interrupted by Ottoman conquest.[81] They tend to emphasize that conquest arrested organic development and cut off their countries from the European mainstream, re-orientating them towards the Orient. Biographies are still an important genre giving emphasis to regional lords and leaders of anti-Ottoman

[78] İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age 1300–1600.*

[79] This implies strong continuity and even symbiosis between Byzantium, the Orthodox Cultures of the Balkans and the Ottomans. In this symbiosis, Byzantium is the prevailing factor; Turkish nationalist historians such as Fuad Köprülü therefore refuted this thesis; Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire* p. 23. Cf. Büşra Ersanli, "The Ottoman Empire in the Historiography of the Kemalist Era: a Theory of Fatal Decline", in: *The Ottomans and the Balkans*, edited by Fikret Adanir and Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden: Brill 2002), pp. 115–154, especially pp. 127–134.

[80] Raymond Detrez, "Understanding the Pre-Nationalist Balkans: The 'Romaic' Community", in: *Greek-Bulgarian Relations in the Age of National Identity Formation*, edited by Paschalis M. Kitromilides and Anna Tabaki (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2010), pp. 21–69; Ioannis Zelepos, *Orthodoxe Eiferer im osmanischen Südosteuropa. Die Kollyvadenbewegung (1750–1820) und ihr Beitrag zu den Auseinandersetzungen um Tradition, Aufklärung und Identität* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012); Konrad Petrovszky, *Geschichte schreiben im osmanischen Südosteuropa. Eine Kulturgeschichte orthodoxer Historiographie des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014); *Das osmanische Europa. Methoden und Perspektiven der Frühneuzeitforschung zu Südosteuropa*, edited by Konrad Petrovszky/Andreas Helmedach/ Markus Koller/ Stefan Rohdewald (Leipzig: Eudora, 2013).

[81] Cf. the collection of articles by an important Serbian specialist in late medieval history, Momčilo Spremić, *Prekinut uspon. Srpske zemlje u poznom srednjem veku* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2005); monographs offering diverging interpretations are *Istorija srpskog naroda* vol. 1–2 (Belgrade: Srpska Književna Zadruga 1982); Momčilo Spremić, *Despot Đurađ Branković i njegovo doba* (Belgrade: Srpska Književna Zadruga, 1994); Ivan Božilov and Vasil Gjuzelev, *Istorija na srednovekovna Bălgarija* (Sofia: Anubis 1999); Šima Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države* (Belgrade: Srpska Književna Zadruga, 1964); Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti*; Siniša Mišić, *Humska zemlja u srednjem veku* (Belgrade: DBR International Publishing, 1996); Esad Kurtović, *Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača* (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2009).

resistance.[82] The late Middle Ages constitute thus a period of an end and catastrophe in a double sense: in a chronological one, but also by integrating at least partially and in varying intensity chiliastic interpretations of late medieval sources into modern narratives.[83] There are of course national varieties, the best-known case being the Serbian one, which also unfolded enormous sociocultural power and deeply influenced collective memory and political action. The myth of Kosovo does not remember decline, but defeat and redemption, and this tradition goes back to an ecclesiastical culture of memory which is almost contemporary to the events.[84] It is therefore astonishing that the actual end of Serbian statehood, the fall of Smederevo in 1459, has not found a major echo in popular memory. A recently published conference volume of the Serbian Academy has emphasized this point very clearly;[85] the same holds true for the fall of Novo brdo, one of the largest and richest towns in the

[82] Rade Mihaljčić, *Lazar Hrebeljanović. Istorija – kult – predanje* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1984); Dubravko Lovrenović, "Kralj Tvrtko I. Kotromanić (1353–1391): vladar u europskim okvirima – spomenik jednoj mogućnosti", in: Dubravko Lovrenović, *Bosanska kvadratura kruga* (Sarajevo-Zagreb: Dobra knjiga, 2012), pp. 329–384; Spremić, *Despot Đurađ Branković i njegovo doba*; Sima Ćirković, *Stefan Vukčić Kosača i njegovo doba* (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1964); Schmitt, *Skanderbeg*; Kurtović, *Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača*. Cf. the series of biographies of Byzantine emperors by the Belgrade school of Byzantine studies: Radivoj Radić, *Vreme Jovana V Paleologa 1332–1391* (Belgrade: Vizantološki Institut, 1993); Sanja Mešanović, *Jovan VII Paleolog* (Belgrade: Vizantološki Institut, 1996); Ivan Đurić, *Sumrak Vizantije – vreme Jovana VIII Paleologa 1392–1448* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1984); Donald M. Nicol, *The Reluctant Emperor. A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk, c. 1295–1383* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Donald M. Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor. The Life and Legend of Constantine Palaiologos, Last Emperor of the Romans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). In Ottoman studies, a recent example of this approach is Theoharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs. The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453–1474)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). Cf. Mihailo St. Popović, *Mara Branković. Eine Frau zwischen dem christlichen und dem islamischen Kulturkreis im 15. Jahrhundert* (Mainz – Ruhpolding: Rutzen, 2010).

[83] Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature in Byzantium and Medieval Bulgaria* (Sofia: Iztok-Zapad, 2011); Snezhana Rakova and Pavlina Bojcheva, "La mémoire historique des événements intervenus dans les Balkans depuis le milieu du XIVe jusqu'au XVe siècle", *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 2003/1–4, pp. 215–230.

[84] Maximilian Braun, *"Kosovo". Die Schlacht auf dem Amselfelde in geschichtlicher und epischer Überlieferung* (Berlin: Markert und Petters, 1937); Vladimir Mošin, "Samodržac Stefan, knez Lazar i tradicija Nemanjičkog suvereniteta od Marice do Kosovo" in: *O knezu Lazaru*, edited by Ivan Božić (Belgrade: Filozofski fakultet, 1975), pp. 13–43; Rade Mihaljčić, *Junaci kosovske legende* i (Belgrade 1989); Thomas A. Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha Kosovo, 1389* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Frank Kämpfer, "Der Kult des heiligen Serbenfürsten Lazar", *Südost-Forschungen* 31 (1982): pp. 81–139.

[85] *Pad srpske despotovine 1459 godine.*

Medieval Balkans, which was conquered in 1455, only two years after the fall of Constantinople.[86] Research could not only recognize these observations as facts, but concentrate more on interpretation – there was for instance long before the end of Serbian statehood (in 1459) a strong ecclesiastical cult of 1389, but the rather unheroic circumstances of the fall of Smederevo, which was ruled in its last days by a Bosnian prince, certainly explain partially why it was not integrated into an already firmly established heroic and transcendental narrative of death and resurrection. The Bulgarian case impresses because of the lack of sources and the general absence of a cultural echo comparable to the Serbian case; the small number of short chronicles referring to the fall of Tărnovo can probably only partially be explained by the loss of sources.[87] The fall of the royal residence did not have either the same socio-cultural potential of a powerful *lieu de mémoire* in modern Bulgaria as the battle of 1389 has had in Serbia, especially since the late nineteenth century. Croatia, which did not belong to the Orthodox Commonwealth, lost most of its territory, but maintained the idea of constitutional continuity, which led to the formation of a narrative of an *Antemurale Christianitatis* as in Hungary and Transylvania, which constitute for Croatia a better frame of comparison than the Bulgarian or Serbian case.

Byzantine studies tend to favour a narrative of political decline which contrasts with the last blossoming of Byzantine culture – one might observe similarities with the Bulgarian narrative, which equally combines a flourishing culture and political fragmentation.[88] In 1453, Constantinople fell, and the end of Byzantine statehood constitutes the conventional endpoint of the discipline.[89] Like 1389, 1453, the year of the *halosis*, entered popular memory and remained

[86] *Novo brdo*, edited by Vojislav Jovanović et al. (Belgrade: Republički Zavod za Zaštitu Spomenika Kulture, 2004).

[87] Bistra A. Cvetkova, "Sur le sort de Tărnovo, capitale bulgare au Moyen Âge, après sa prise par les Osmanlis", *Byzantino-Bulgarica* 2 (1966): pp. 181–193; Stefka Părveva, "Intercultural Contact and Interaction in the Ottoman Period: the Zaviye Kavak Baba and the Church of the Holy Forty Martyrs in the Real and Imaginery World of Christians and Moslems in the Town of Veliko Tărnovo", *Bulgarian Historical Review* 30/1–2 (2002): pp. 13–54; Dessislava Lilova , "Relater la chute sous le pouvoir ottoman: la version bulgare", *Balkanologie* 12/1 (2010) http://balkanologie.revues.org/index2140.html.

[88] Ivan Božilov/ Vasil Gjuzelev, *Istorija na srednovekovna Bălgarija* (Sofia: Anubis, 1999).

[89] Michael Angold, *The fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans: Context and Consequences* (Harlow: Longman, 2012); a rather conventional reading is offered by Jonathan Harris, *The End of Byzantium* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), cf. the highly innovative article by Thierry Ganchou, "Le rachat des Notaras après la chute de Cobstantinople ou les relations 'étrangères' de l'élite byzantine au XVe siècle", in: *Migrations et diasporas méditerranéennes (Xe–XVe siècles)*, edited by Michel Balard and Alain Ducellier (Paris : Publications de la Sorbonne, 2002), pp. 149–229.

an extremely powerful *lieu de mémoire*. Both mobilized at the end of the Ottoman Empire Serbian and Greek soldiers longing for revenge and restoration of their respective medieval empires.

These approaches contrast with narratives of beginning and rise: Ottoman studies focuses on the victorious march of a new empire and is interested in methods of conquest and stabilizing power. The Balkan – Christian – Middle Ages are in this perspective a prehistory of an imperial master narrative which juxtaposes a Christian Balkans in political turmoil, with marked social tensions and general decline, on the one side, and on the other the successful Ottoman Empire that brought political stability, religious tolerance, social justice and economic prosperity in the *Pax ottomanica*.

There are moreover regional narratives of beginning and rise dependent on or independent of Ottoman conquest. Non-Slavic Palaeobalkanic ethnic groups such as Romanians and Albanians formed political entities in the late Middle Ages; in the case of Wallachia (around 1330) and Moldavia (around 1360), they proved to be stable structures, while the numerous small Albanian principalities were short-lived phenomena in Balkan history.[90] Both Romanian principalities evolved in a buffer area at the periphery of the steppes; the retreat of the Golden Horde and the inability of the Hungarian crown to integrate areas on the Eastern and Southern slopes of the Carpathian mountains constitute the frame for the emergence of the two principalities. Especially in the case of Moldavia, founding myths were powerful; the legend of the first prince dismounting from his horse (*descălecare*), the hunting of the aurochs or the dog Molda are told again and again in old Moldavian chronicles such as those by Grigore Ureche or Miron Costin.[91] National romantic historians such as Nicolae Iorga outlined an epic period of founders (*ctitori*) and emphasized the contrast between decay south of the Danube and political spring north of the stream. This narrative also underlines the contrast between the loss of statehood and the role of protector of Orthodoxy in the Ottoman Empire, a role Wallachia and Moldavia claimed until the emergence of the Russian empire as the protecting force of Balkan Orthodoxy

[90] Milan v. Šufflay, *Städte und Burgen Albaniens hauptsächlich während des Mittelalters* (Vienna: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1924); Ivan Božić, *Nemirno pomorje XV veka* (Belgrade: Srpska Književna Zadruga, 1979); Alain Ducellier, *La façade maritime de l'Albanie au moyen* âge. *Durazzo et Valona du XIe au XVe siècle* (Thessalonike: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1981); Luan Malltezi, *Qytetet e bregdetit shqiptar gjatë sundimit venedikas* (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave, 1988); Schmitt, *Das venezianische Albanien*.

[91] Ştefan Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei: probleme controversate* (Iaşi: Editură Universităţii A.I. Cuza, 1997); Flavius Solomon, *Politica şi confesiune la început de ev mediu moldovenesc* (Iaşi: Editură Universităţii A.I. Cuza 2004).

in the time of Peter the Great.[92] In the traditional Romanian perspective, the thirteenth century, marked by Mongol expansion and Hungarian intervention, constitutes a preparatory period, a prehistory of Romanian statehood, which lasted without interruption from the fourteenth century until modern times. Romanian historiography thus emphasized the continuity of national statehood – in contrast to all historiographies south of the Danube – and combines it with the idea of the continuity of Byzantine-Balkan Orthodoxy, also integrating elements of the Byzantine imperial idea, without ever claiming full heritage of the Second Rome.[93] Special emphasis is also given to those princes who resisted the Ottoman advance and were even able to defeat Ottoman armies. Mircea the Elder, Vlad the Impaler of Wallachia and Stephen the Great of Moldavia symbolize successful Christian warfare north of the Danube.[94] Together with John Hunyadi and Scanderbeg, they are the most powerful symbols of Christian resistance.

Recent scholarship however has turned upside down a central element of interpretation: control over territory in Wallachia evolved out of the necessity to pay tribute to the Ottoman Empire. Before, political power had been based on personal ties of loyalty, and the boundaries of the principality had remained rather vague. Ottoman political and fiscal pressure forced the princes to tighten their control over the people and the land in order to satisfy the pressing Ottoman demands for cattle and cereals.[95] Furthermore, there is an ongoing debate in Romanian historiography on the juridical status of the principalities within the Ottoman political system. Both the contributions by Gorovei/Székely and Pippidi question whether a unilateral reading of Ottoman legal treatises does full justice to the highly complex political reality north of the Danube. They reject therefore the recent thesis put foward by Viorel Panaite that both principalities were mere provinces of the Sultan and propose instead a cross-reading of Ottoman and various Christian sources in order to explore the tension between the Ottoman perspective and the political reality on the ground.

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[92] Petre Năsturel, *Le Mont Athos et les Roumains. Recherches sur leurs relations du milieu du XIVe siècle à 1654* (Rome : Pontificium institutum studiorum orientalium, 1986); Ekkehard Völkl, *Das rumänische Fürstentum Moldau und die Ostslaven im 15. bis 17. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975).

[93] Andrei Pippidi, *Tradiția politică* în *Țările române* în *secolele XVI–XVIII* (second edition Bucharest: Corint, 2001); Andrei Pippidi, *Byzantins, Ottomans, Roumains* (Paris: Champion, 2005); Andrei Pippidi, *Hommes et idées du sud-est européen à l'aube de l'âge moderne* (Bucharest: Editură Academiei, 1980).

[94] Petre P. Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân* (reprint Bucharest: Corint, 2000); Matei Cazacu, *Dracula* (Paris: Tallandier, 2004); Șt. Gorovei – Maria Magdalena Székely, *Princeps omni laude maior. O istorie a lui* Ștefan *cel Mare* (Sfântă Mănăstire Putna: Mușatini, 2005).

[95] Marian Coman, *Putere și teritoriu. Țara românească medievală (secolele XIV–XV)* (Iași : Polirom, 2013).

The Albanian narrative is still more complicated: it presents Scanderbeg's uprising as the establishment of a Albanian national state – but in the Albanian discourse the narrative of a catastrophe that cut off the Albanians from the European and Christian roots is challenged by the thesis that only Islamisation prevented the Albanians from being completely Hellenised or Slavicised by Balkan Orthodoxy (Kaleshi thesis).[96] Influential Albanian historians deny the idea of a Byzantine Commonwealth and postulate a steady de-Byzantinisation from the High Middle Ages and the late Middle Ages are thus presented as period of a fully developed national state and a society with a clear national consciousness closely connected to an anti-Greek and anti-Serbian and therefore generally anti-Orthodox position.[97] Modern opposition to Orthodox neighbours is projected into a remote past, and most Albanians do not even know the Byzantine origin of the national stemma, Scanderbeg's double-headed eagle.

There is another historiography which consistently thinks like Kaleshi in terms of "redemption through Ottoman conquest" and defence and even expansion of national identity in the frame of the Ottoman Empire: the Bosniak interpretation of the late Middle Ages. In this perspective, medieval Bosnia was under twofold pressure from its Catholic and Orthodox neighbours; its religion, the Bosnian Church, the very expression of Bosnian identity, escaped submission only by conversion to Islam, which saved Bosnian Christians from the threat of cultural extermination. 1463, the year of the Ottoman conquest, is seen as the symbol of an ethnogenetic process: Bosnian society and its heretical Church were transformed from an object of religious persecution, a community of victims, into a new community which owed its survival and

[96] Cf. Kaleshi, *Das türkische Vordringen*; Kristo Frashëri, *Skënderbeu – jeta dhe vepra* (Tirana: Toena, 2002); Kasem Biçoku, *Skënderbeu dhe Shqipëria në kohën e tij* (Tirana: Botimpex, 2005); Kasem Biçoku, *Për Skënderbeun* (Tirana: Botimpex, 2005); Schmitt, *Skanderbeg*; Oliver Jens Schmitt, "Skanderbeg et les Sultans: anatomie d' une rébellion contre l'Empire ottoman", *Turcica* 43 (2011): pp. 55–90; Oliver Jens Schmitt, "Skanderbeg reitet wieder – Wiederfindung und Erfindung eines (National)Helden im balkanischen und gesamteuropäischen Kontext (15.–21. Jahrhundert)", in: *Schnittstellen. Festschrift Holm Sundhaussen*, edited by Ulf Brunnbauer, Andreas Helmedach and Stefan Troebst (Munich, Oldenbourg, 2007), 401–419; Oliver Jens Schmitt, "Historiography in Post-Independence Kosovo", in: *Civic and Uncivic Values in Kosovo*, edited by Al Simkus, Ola Listhaus and Sabrina Ramet (Budapest: CEU Press 2015), pp. 53–74; Oliver Jens Schmitt, "Islamisierung bei den Albanern – zwischen Forschungsfrage und Diskurs", in: *Osmanen und Islam in Südosteuropa*, edited by Reinhard Lauer and Hans Georg Majer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2013), pp. 243–268.

[97] Pëllumb Xhufi, "La 'debizantinizzazione' dell'Arbanon", in: *The Medieval Albanians*, edited by Charalampos Gasparis (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1998), pp. 59–77; Xhufi, *Dilemat e Arbërit*; Pëllumb Xhufi, *Ikja nga Bizanti* (Tirana: Dituria, 2009).

full cultural development to its conversion to Islam. This interpretation was eventually fully elaborated during the war of 1991–1995.[98]

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE VOLUME

This brief overview of concepts demonstrates the different paths regional and extra-regional historiographies have chosen since the late nineteenth century. They all share, however, an interest in continuity and discontinuity as heuristic categories. When speaking about the end, narratives either use the idea of a caesura or transition. A caesura or rupture usually implies a negative interpretation of Ottoman conquest, the most radical one being a catastrophe theory. On the other hand, focusing on continuity and transition may express the tendency to minimize the violence of the conquest. Theories of continuity can therefore be categorized into several interpretations:

- A Balkan-Orthodox variety in the sense of *Byzance après Byzance* which conceptualizes the Ottoman Empire as the frame of a Post-Byzantine Orthodox culture which is at the very heart of scholarly interest, the Ottoman Empire and its Muslim dimension remaining rather in the shade; there is a subtype of this narrative with a rather anti-Occidental tendency which reflects intellectual currents in early modern Orthodox Balkan culture;
- An Ottomanist variety, which does perceive the period in terms of transition and integration into a higher, i.e. more developed stage of socioeconomic and political organization, and tends to avoid the term "conquest" or a detailed description of wars and realted consequences of violence.

It has become evident from the discussion that binary models prevail when it comes to describing the process of Ottoman conquest: victory versus defeat; decline versus emergence; integration versus destruction; the Ottomans and the others; Muslims and non-Muslims; Pre-Ottoman and Ottoman; Byzantine and Post-Byzantine to name but a few. They might be useful for structuring the field, but models that are more complex have to be taken into consideration as well.

This volume employs a double architecture of structural and regional approaches that are analyzed from several disciplinary perspectives. It does not focus on the whole process of Ottoman expansion that also encompassed the Near East and the Pontic region. It deliberately concentrates on one historical region. One of our contributors, Maurus Reinkowski, recently reminded his fellow Ottomanists of the importance of regional history in Ottoman studies and of the methodological

[98] Birin, *Stjepan Tomašević (1461.–1463.)* stands aloof from such politicized interpretations.

dangers of a centre–periphery model based on "imperial" sources.[99] He also emphasized that regional history within an imperial frame should be studied for its own sake and from a regional perspective. A regional case study has to combine regional and extra-regional evidence – the same is true for the disciplinary approach. Structures and space as main pillars of this volume have to be combined on various levels: a purely spatial approach tends to produce regionally confined "*histoires totales*" which remain isolated if they are not placed in a wider comparative framework. Structural approaches often suffer from the lack of comparative methods. The considerable regional differences – and the national and, more practically, linguistic fragmentation of historiography we have already referred to – explain why studies on social, economic and cultural topics often rely on only one thoroughly researched regional or local case. Neither Southeastern European nor extra-regional Medieval or Ottoman studies have so far made full use of the great wealth of existing evidence, which virtually means putting together the pieces of a huge puzzle.

Ideally, a research program encompassing the entire Balkans in the period of Ottoman conquest would consist of

- military history – reasons/patterns of submission, resistance, adaptation, intermediary forms of reactions to the Ottoman conquest.
- political history – regional Orthodox principalities and Muslim Marcher lordships; centralization processes in the Ottoman Empire as part of the dynamics of the conquest process; the impact of the Christian great powers (Hungary and Venice) and Christian-Ottoman *condominia* in contested areas (Albania, Bosnia, Serbia, Dubrovnik, Wallachia, Moldavia).
- demographic changes: population loss caused by: violence; flight; deportation; emigration; immigration; changes to the settlement network: destruction of settlements; emergence of new settlements; adaptation/enlargement of existing settlements.
- changes in culture/religion: status of regional Christian church networks; adaptation of regional Churches to Ottoman rule; emergence of Islam; conversion to Islam; factors of Islamisation; emergence of the Dervish *tarikat*.
- institutions: continuity of Balkan-Orthodox institutions, adaptation to the Ottoman model; disappearance of institutions; creation of new patterns of administration.
- continuity/integration of Balkan-Orthodox elites into the Ottoman power system; cases/reasons for resistance of political and social elites

[99] Maurus Reinkowski, "The Ottoman Empire and South Eastern Europe from a Turkish Perspective", in: *Images of Imperial Legacy. Modern Discourses on the Social and Cultural Impact of Ottoman and Habsburg Rule in Southeast Europe*, edited by Tea Sindbaek and Maximilian Hartmuth (Berlin: LIT, 2011), pp. 19–36 (p. 36).

- society: transformation or continuity of rural society; legal and social status of peasants; social mobility.
- economy: changes in agricultural production, commerce, mining.
- material culture: architecture; clothing; alimentation.[100]

For obvious reasons this volume addresses only some dimensions of such an ambitious program:

1) The Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans in an enlarged frame of comparison (with the conquest of Syria and Egypt, contribution by Reinkowski).
2) Social and cultural consequences of the conquest (demographic change, warfare, integration of regional societies, conversion/islamisation, contributions by Boykov, Kiprovska and Krstić)
3) regional cases of resistance and accommodation (Central Balkans, Wallachia and Moldavia, contributions by Filiposki, Pippidi and Gorovei/Székely).
4) Ottoman military competition with the major Christian maritime power (Venice, contribution by Cristea)
5) The Ottoman conquest in Early Modern and Modern regional cultures of memory (the case of Bosnia presented by Lovrenović, Wallachia by Pippidi)

A major source of theoretical inspiration is, as outlined at the beginning of this introduction, the traditional and theoretically highly sophisticated research debate on the decline and fall of the Western Roman Empire, which in the last 250 years has produced a wide range of analytical tools and explanatory models. The key question remains whether the disappearance of the Western Roman Empire has to be interpreted as breakdown of a declining society, the murder of a flourishing empire or a smooth transition process that led to the emergence of a new Germano-Romanic Europe. In a monograph on causes of the Fall of Rome, the German historian Alexander Demandt presented more than 200 – mainly mono-causal – theories (a range stretching from Darwinist theories of "elimination of the best" to the consequences of climate change and plague). The discussion of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans has much to learn from this debate and the shortcomings of scholarly work focusing on single phenomena. A particularly impressive aspect of this field of research is the high degree of self-reflection. In fact, the mono-causal models often mirror contemporary concerns of the periods historians lived in. It is no surprise that several recent contributions emphasize migration as central pattern of change in the first millennium AD. Climate change and plague also figure prominently among the topics of ongoing debates. Religious change and its impact on society and culture have been disputed since Edward Gibbon deplored Christiani-

[100] These long-term transformations are studied in detail in a recent monograph by Marija Kocić, *Orijentalizacija materijalne kulture na Balkanu. Osmanski period XV–XIX vek* (Belgrade: Hesperia edu, 2010).

sation as the major cause of Roman decline. The debate on the Roman Empire has not only opened numerous research fields whose methods and results invite comparative approaches. It has also questioned key concepts such as empire, invasion, decline, transition, identity or ethnicity. An entire intellectual history of the Occident, from Enlightenment to post-modernist theories, can be written along the development of this discussion.

This discussion and its theoretical models should not be mechanically imported into the field of Late medieval Balkan history. They help us however to sharpen our methodological tools and to formulate more sophisticated theoretical questions. The main challenge certainly is to interrelate different models and to avoid simple addition in an incoherent *histoire totale* that says everything and ultimatelyexplains nothing. Envisioning the whole process of the Ottoman conquest in such a complex political, social and cultural environment as the Late Medieval Balkans is a daunting task, and it is tempting to shy away from asking big questions and to concentrate on smaller or mid-range problems that are easier to solve. This volume is based on the assumption that only by asking big questions can research make great strides. Such ambitious questions also encompass the meta-historical or ideological dimension; the societal consequences of research results should be made explicit and discussed, too. Although the terminology might often seem problematic, it is legitimate and necessary to ask: Was the Ottoman conquest the result of a military expansion or a smooth transition process? Who were the Ottomans? Turkish invaders or a part of regional societies? Was it a clash between Islam, Orthodoxy and Catholicism in the Southeastern part of Europe or did religion not matter? Were they *gazis* or a plundering community, as Heath Lowry labelled them? What was the role of Turkish immigration and Islamisation? What were the demographic consequences of Ottoman conquest and how can we assess them? Did Ottoman rule really offer a better life than the Orthodox Commonwealth it replaced, as Halil İnalcık asserted? Moreover, how can we measure change in social life and fiscal systems? Did the conquest alter the historical path of Balkan Orthodox societies – did they fall out of European history, as the Hungarian medievalist Jenő Szűcs put it?[101] What was the impact of Ottoman conquest on European history? In addition, how can we integrate it into a broader interpretation of European history? As interactions between empires, centres and peripheries, multiple border zones and frontiers? This list might be enlarged, changed and criticized, but it serves as a tool for structuring a very complex field. New perspectives will inevitably lead to new interpretations.

After the deconstruction of nationalist discourses in the Balkans, there is a need for a critical revision of how Ottoman studies deal with the period of con-

[101] Jenő Szűcz, *Die drei historischen Regionen Europas* (Frankfurt a. M.: Neue Kritik, 1990).

quest. This process however is not meant to simply support obsolete nationalist discourses; it envisages a new level of scholarly debate. There are clearly signs for new horizons in this field, especially a re-assessment of the impact of conversion to Islam[102] and fresh interest in agencies and actors, the complex intermingling of Orthodox and Ottoman political players in the century 1350–1450, i.e. before the steady centralization of power by Mehmed II.

The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans is therefore much more of a regional history than historians have tended to believe. Many actors were well acquainted with each other and their actions have to be re-interpreted in the light of personal and socio-cultural intimacy. Scanderbeg's history is an argument in this case: his father Ivan Kastriota, an unruly Ottoman vassal, was eventually eliminated. Scanderbeg, himself a hostage at the Ottoman court who converted to Islam and participated in Ottoman campaigns against Serbia and Transylvania, joined a Balkano-Anatolian conspiracy against Murad II. His most dangerous enemies were Albanian converts to Islam (such as Balaban bey) or his former comrades in arms in the Ottoman army (such as the former Ottoman governor of Kruja, Hızır bey, and his family), as well as members of his own family (Hamza and Reposh Kastriota). Warfare in Central Albania was waged not between "Albanians" and "Turkish invaders", rather the local conflict lines ran along personal feuds in the milieu of Albanian converts and along rivalries between regional noble families. Scanderbeg had to cope with Ottoman Marcher lords from Skopje and Thessaly and Christian regional dynasties such as the Dukagjins. As a vassal of the Kingdom of Naples, he took part in an Italian proxy war in the Balkans against Venice. He was however the only Balkan prince to decline the Sultan's offer of a vassal principality. The Serbian example obviously taught him the lesson that vassality was nothing other than a step towards complete submission.[103]

There is a second important aspect in regional history: research has focused strongly on border zones and contested peripherical areas.[104] For those areas that were under firm Ottoman control, we possess a multitude of regional and local case studies and an impressive series of published tax registers. We still lack,

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[102] Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam. Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011); there is now a most valuable annotated bibliography on this topic, *Les conversions à l'Islam en Asie Mineure et dans les Balkans aux époques seldjoukide et ottomane. Bibliographie raisonnée (1800–2000),* edited by Gilles Grivaud and Alexandre Popovic (Athens: École française d'Athènes, 2011).

[103] Schmitt, *Skanderbeg*; Schmitt, "Skanderbeg et les Sultans"; Momčilo Spremić, "Turski tributari u XĪV i XV veku", in: Spremić, pp. 275–327, first published in *Istorijski glasnik* 1–2 (1970): pp. 9–58.

[104] *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World,* edited by A.C.S Peackock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

however, an interpretative monograph on the Central (Macedonia, Thessaly) and especially the Eastern Balkans (Thrace, Bulgaria) in the fifteenth century. Especially the latter has virtually remained in the shadow of research on the Western and Northern border area. The fifteenth century in this area is certainly not a dark century, but a period that is quite obscure for most scholars apart from those initiated in detail research (especially Machiel Kiel and Bulgarian Ottomanists such as Rossitsa Gradeva, Evgenij Radušev, Svetlana Ivanova, Mariya Kiprovska or Grigor Boykov).[105] Therefore we need a regional history that studies both the interrelation between Orthodox and Muslim regional lordships and their interaction with central zones close to the Ottoman court. In analogy to a comparable term in German medieval studies – "kaisernah", literally "close to the emperor" – one might propose the term "sultansnahe Zonen".

As in many other aspects of this period of deep change, there are two sides of the coin: Ottomanised Balkan Christians as actors in the process of conquest, and Turkophone Muslims changing the demographic features especially of the Southern and Eastern Balkans. A detail from the family history of the tri-confessional (Catholic, Bosnian Church, and Orthodox) dynasty of Herzegovina, may illustrate this intra-regional intimacy and its impact on policy-making in an age of change. After the death of Herceg Stjepan Vukčić Kosača (1435–1466), who for decades had manoeuvred between Ottoman Marcher lords, Bosnian magnates, Hungary and Venice, his three sons chose different political options: Stefan, the youngest, converted to Islam and had, as Ahmed Hersekoğlu or Hersekzade, a brilliant career as Grand Vezir of Mehmed II.[106] His brother Vlatko married Margarita Marzano, granddaughter of King Alfons V of Aragón and Naples, in 1474. In 1482, he emigrated to Venetian Dalmatia. After his death, his widow married the Venetian patrician Marco Loredan, and their offspring joined the ranks of the Venetian Great Council. Vladislav, who had married a Byzantine lady (Kyra Kantakuzena), enjoyed a career in both the Hungarian and Venetian services (both powers were competing for influence in the area), and eventually emigrated to Hungary. Vlatko survived the Ottoman onslaught because the Grand Vezir entrusted with carrying out the conquest of the last remains of the family possessions had warned him in time: it was none other than his own brother Stefan-Ahmed.[107]

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[105] *Bălgarija prez XV vek* has passed almost unnoticed.

[106] Ludwig von Thallóczy, *Studien zur Geschichte Bosniens und Serbiens im Mittelalter* (Munich: Duncker und Humblot, 1914), pp. 217–218.

[107] Đuro Tošić, "Fragmenti iz života hercega Vlatka Kosače", *Historijski časopis* 56/2 (2008): pp. 153–172; Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr/Boško Bojović, "Le traité de paix conclu entre Vlatko et Mehmed II", *Balcanica* 24 (1993): pp. 75–86; Marko Šunjić, "Vlatko Kosača u Poljicima", *Godišnjak društva istoričara BiH* 34 (1983): pp. 145–147.


Kingdom of Bohemia
Prague
Troppau
Kingdom of Polonia
Cracow
Lemberg
M. = Margravate
D. = Duchy
Holy Roman Empire
Margravate of Moravia
Regensburg
Passau
Brünn
Duchy of Austria
Kremnitz
Neusohl
Kaschau
Salzburg
Linz
Vienna
Preßburg
Schemnitz
Visegrád
Suceava
Moldavia
Bender
Duchy of Styria
Lake Neusiedl
Gran
Ofen
Wardein
Roman
Bistritz
Duchy of Carinthia
Graz
Stuhlweißenburg
Klausenburg
Vaslui
Kingdom of Hungary
Cetatea Albă/ Akkerman
Laibach
Kalocsa
Schäßburg
M. of Carniola
Agram
Fünfkirchen
Kronstadt
Chilia
Slavonia
Mohács
Hermannstadt
Câmpulung
Brăila
Venice
Rijeka
Târgoviște
Republik of Venice
Zengg
Jaice
Zvornik
Belgrade
Curtea de Argeș
Croatia
Bobovac
Smederevo
Silistra
Zadar
Srebrenica
Vidin
Giurgiu
Bosnia
Serbia
Wallachia
Black Sea
Adriatic Sea
Šibenik
Split
Nikopol
Šumen
Varna
States of the Church
Mostar
Hum
Niš
Tărnovo
Mesembria
Dubrovnik
Novi
Peć
Novo Brdo
Sofia
Philippopolis
Sozopolis
Kotor
Shkodra
Prizren
Velbužd
Bar
Skopje
Adrianople
Bizye
Rome
Ulcinj
Lezha
Durrës
Ohrid
Serres
Constantinople
Kingdom of Naples
Bari
Thasos
Kastoria
Thessaloniki
Vlora
Verria
Athos
Ottoman Empire
Butrint
Ioannina
Meteora
Aegean Sea
Tyrrhenian Sea
Corfu
Larissa
Arta
Lesbos
Naupáktos/ Lepanto
Negroponte
Chios
Palermo
Patras
D. of Athens
Messina
Glarentza
Korintho
Athens
Kingdom of Sicily
Principality of Achaia
Nauplia
Duchy of Naxos
Mistra
Modon
Koron
Monemvasia
Rhodes
Malta
Chania/ Canea
Herakleion/ Candia
Rethymnon
Crete
Mediterranean Sea
Serbian regional rulers
1 Balšić
2 Branković
3 Lazarević
Ottoman regional rulers
4 Turahanoğlu
5 Paşa Yiğit
6 Evrenos
7 Mihaloğlu
Albanian and Epirotic lordships
8 Principality of Epirus
9 Spata
10 Zenebish
11 Thopia
Anatolian Emirates
12 Saruhan
13 Aydın
14 Menteşe
Byzantine Empire (1403)
Venetian territories (1409)
Genoese lordships
Order of St John
Border of the Holy Roman Empire
The Balkans 1400
0 100 200 300 km
© Office for Cartographie J. Zwick, 35394 Gießen

Conquests Compared. The Ottoman Expansion in the Balkans and the Mashreq in an Islamicate context

Maurus Reinkowski

POLES OF HISTORIOGRAPHY

In western writing on Islam there are still two major threads of interpretation explaining the expansion of Islam over an enormous geographical space and during an extended time period from the seventh century to the immediate present. On the one hand we have the theory of religious warfare, or at least of religiously inspired conquest, and on the other hand the explanation that the spread of the Islamic religion is due to various, basically peaceful, forms of expansion that are culturally, socially and economically motivated. As prototypical examples of these two conflicting interpretations one may cite Paul Wittek's *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*, which considers the *raison d'être* of the Ottoman Empire to have been based on the idea of religious warfare, or Thomas W. Arnold's *The Preaching of Islam,* which argues that the rapid expansion is to be explained by means of peaceful religious propaganda.[1]

Sir Thomas Walker Arnold (1864–1930) was a British Orientalist who from his twenties onwards taught in various colleges and universities in South Asia. "He formed a very strong bond with Indian Muslims and worked devotedly in the cause of reform in Islam."[2] In his book *The Preaching of Islam*, he argues that the success of the Muslim expansion from the seventh century onwards is to be explained by the weak internal conditions of those states that succumbed to Islam.[3] Furthermore, Arnold stresses that in the general history of Islamic

[1] Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire,* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1938); Thomas W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam. A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith,* (London: Luzac, 1935) (first published in 1913).

[2] B. W. Robinson, s.v. Arnold, Thomas Walker, in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 3 (1989).

[3] Arnold's argument of the political weakness and fragmentation of the countries conquered by Muslim armies resounds in later publications on the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, see Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age 1300–1600*. 2nd. ed. (London: Phoenix, 2000) (first published in 1973), p. 11: "It is not difficult to account for the ease of

expansion we hear nothing "of any organised attempt to force the acceptance of Islam on the non-Muslim population, or of any systematic persecution intended to stamp out the Christian religion […]"[4]

Paul Wittek (born in 1894 in Baden, a town close to Vienna, died in 1978 in England) was an Austrian, later English Orientalist. His *gazi* thesis was, until the 1980s, possibly the most influential explanation for the early formation of the Ottoman empire. Colin Heywood has shown that Wittek's gazi thesis was influenced by intellectual currents beyond the academic world. Wittek, a follower of the charismatic poet Stefan George (1868–1933), imported a romanticizing, heroicizing world view into Ottoman history and inflated Mehmed II into a kind of *super gazi*.[5]

Wittek quite rightly notes the closeness of the conquering Muslim Turks (whom he calls, generically, *gazis*) to the established pre-Islamic population in Anatolia: "This mixed borderland civilization now became after the conquest of the eleventh century characteristic for the whole of Turkish Asia Minor." But then Wittek continues and argues that the intense conflict with the Byzantine state, in the immediate vicinity of the Ottomans, hardened the Ottomans' mentality and strengthened their belligerence: "But in the struggle with this [i.e. the Byzantines'] extraordinary resistance the Ghāzī state of Osman developed its extraordinary strength. The grave sternness and tenacious courage which distinguished this state in its later history were deeply imprinted upon its soul during these years of its early youth."[6] With the beginning of Ottoman expansion into Southeastern Europe, from the 1360s onwards, the gazi venture had become the venture of the state itself: "Yet it always felt it was a state of Ghāzīs serving the idea of the holy war, and it actually was now the Ghāzī state kat'exochen."[7]

Obviously, neither of these two antithetic interpretations, Wittek's 'north pole' and Arnold's 'south pole', can be considered an adequate overall explanation for the variety of forms of expansion of the Muslim world. For example, in the riparian regions of the Indian Ocean, particularly in Eastern Africa and in

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Ottoman conquest in the Balkans. The Ottoman invasion coincided with a time of political fragmentation [in that region]"; see also Machiel Kiel, The Incorporation of the Balkans into the Ottoman Empire, in: *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Vol. 1: Byzantium to Turkey, 1071–1453*, edited by Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 138–191 (p. 144): "There was no power left in the Balkans to stop the Ottomans: they filled up a political vacuum."

[4] Arnold, *Preaching of Islam*, p. 79.

[5] Colin Heywood, 'Boundless Dreams of the Levant': Paul Wittek, the George-Kreis, and the Writing of Ottoman History, in: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (London 1989), pp. 32–50.

[6] Wittek, *Rise of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 41.

[7] Wittek, *Rise of the Ottoman Empire,* p. 45.

Southeast Asia, Islam owed its initial expansion to informal networks of Muslim merchants and of learned men.[8] Only from the fifteenth century onwards do we have textual evidence on the presence of Muslim merchant colonies in the harbor cities of Southeast Asia's insular world, and only at a later stage did the inland-bound expansion in the Southeast Asian archipelago take recourse to means of military conquest.[9] More offensive and outright 'orthodox' forms of an Islamic identity seem to have established themselves in Southeast Asia with the beginning 'globalization' of Islam in the late nineteenth century. Amongst other factors, the pilgrimage to Mecca, now available to much larger groups than in the centuries before, led to a higher degree of religious and also ideological mobilization.[10]

Humphrey J. Fisher, a specialist of Islam in Africa, has proposed a model rather similar to the Southeast Asian type, stating a sequence of Islamic expansion with the three periods of *quarantine – mixing – reform.* In the first period of *quarantine,* Islam in a certain region is almost exclusively represented by Muslims from outside, sometimes refugees and others, but most commonly merchants and learned men. There are hardly any converts. In the second phase, during the phase of *mixing* (which is also the phase of mass conversion) multiple forms of contact of Islam with the previous religion(s) are prominent. This state of religious ambiguity comes to an end with the period of *reform* in which orthodox forms of Islam are established and enforced.[11]

The case of South Asia is a particularly illuminating one worthy of comparison with the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans. As in the case of the Balkan Muslims, the question of how Islam expanded and how women and men in South Asia became Muslims is of immediate relevance for the present debates on the 'legitimacy' of the Muslims in today's India and beyond. And as in the Balkans, the establishment of Islam in South Asia owes in principle to military ventures. We need only mention the military expansion of the Ghaznavids in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and Babur's conquest of northern South

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[8] Jerry H. Bentley, *Old World Encounters. Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times,* (New York et al.: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 127–129.

[9] H.J. de Graaf, 'South-East Asian Islam to the Eighteenth Century', in: *The Cambridge History of Islam, vol. 2: The Further Islamic Lands, Islamic Society and Civilization*, edited by Peter M. Holt / Ann K.S. Lambton / Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 123–154.

[10] William R. Roff, South-East Asian Islam in the Nineteenth Century, in: Holt et al., *Further Islamic Lands*, pp. 155–181 (pp. 172f.).

[11] H.J. Fisher, "Conversion Reconsidered: Some Historical Aspects of Religious Conversion in Black Africa", in: *Africa. Journal of the International African Institute* 43 (1973): pp. 27–40, (p. 31).

Asia in the 1520s.[12] Nevertheless, the theory of Islam as the 'religion of the sword' cannot explain the nature of the presence of Islam in South Asia, since it would imply that those regions were most deeply islamized where the power of Islamic dynasties was strongest. In fact, the degree of Islamization is strongest at the fringes of South Asia, i.e. in Punjab (present-day Pakistan) and Bengal (present-day Bangladesh), reaching up to 90% and more, whereas in the former centers of Islamic rule such as Delhi the percentage of Muslims is no higher than 10–15. "In other words, in the subcontinent as a whole there is an inverse relationship between the degree of Muslim political penetration and the degree of Islamization."[13]

Richard Eaton, in his *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier*, shows that the first reliable census, from 1872, indicated the highest rate of Islamization in eastern Bengal, western Punjab, the Northwest Frontier Region and Balochistan. Whereas the high degree of Muslims in the regions of today's Pakistan (western Punjab, the Northwest Frontier Region and Balochistan) may easily be explained by their proximity to the thoroughly Islamized regions of Iran and Central Asia, the high rate of Muslims in eastern Bengal must be attributed to other reasons. Richard Eaton convincingly shows that Islam in eastern Bengal – and indeed in South Asia as a whole! – has to be explained as a fringe phenomenon, i.e. Islam could take firm roots only in those regions which had not been deeply imbued by Hindu culture.[14]

Whereas in both South Asia and the Balkans the importance of military expansion is obvious and debates on Islam relating to the question of identity are somehow comparable, the patterns of Islamization do differ starkly in both areas. Eaton's concept of Islam in South Asia as a 'fringe phenomenon' does not fit the Ottoman case at all, since the core area of the Ottoman Empire is clearly those regions that had been conquered before 1451 – western Anatolia and the southeastern parts of the Balkans. There, the Muslims represented a clear majority.[15]

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[12] I.H. Qureshi, 'Muslim India Before the Mughals', in: Holt et al., *Further Islamic Lands*, pp. 3–34; idem, 'India under the Mughals', in: Holt et al., *Further Islamic Lands*, pp. 35–66.

[13] Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760* (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1993), p. 115. – In opposition to Eaton's thesis of a largely peaceful Muslim expansion in Bengal, Peter van der Veer stresses the role of the *gazi* as warring sufi in South Asia – a phenomenon that would disappear only with the final establishment of British colonial rule in the nineteenth century; Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1994), p. 34.

[14] Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier,* pp. 265, 269, 309, 313.

[15] Kiel, *Incorporation of the Balkans*, p. 156: "[…] yet we can at least conclude for now that the land to the east of the line from Nikopol (Nikopolis, Niğbolu) on the Danube to Kavala on the Aegean, and most of the southern half of Macedonia was, until 1912, at least as 'Turkish' as most of Anatolia."

Ottoman institutions in this core area were rooted most deeply.[16] It is also obvious that the case of an initially almost imperceptible expansion of Islam such as in Southeast Asia is not compatible with the Ottoman case. If the Ottoman Empire were to be judged according to a scale ranging from peaceful to forced expansion, it would have to be situated very clearly on the latter. None of the four main routes of Ottoman expansion, the European, the Anatolian-Caucasian, the Arab and the Mediterranean, can be attributed exclusively to the more or less peaceful spread of Islamic networks. Yet, Fisher's model of three steps, *quarantine – mixing – reform*, has many aspects in common with Ottoman realities, in particular the second period of mixing.

OTTOMAN CONQUEST AND ISLAMICATE EXPANSION

The existence of syncretistic cultures and blurred religious boundaries in Anatolia and the Balkans notwithstanding, the Ottoman expansion fits neatly into the model of the post-Mongolian conqueror states, with a strong portion of religious 'leniency', i.e. pragmatism, but also with a high potential for military aggression, drawing on various sources of legitimation, including imperial tradition and religious ideology.[17] In today's research on Ottoman expansion, however, the military conquest-orientated aspect is very much attenuated and there is a firm stress on the paradigm of Ottoman pragmatism – religious, political and otherwise. In recent decades Wittek's thesis has obviously emigrated from Ottoman studies and found its home in other habitats such as today's djhad or anti-terrorism literature. Arnold's thesis, although not explicitly concerned with the Ottoman Empire, has found wide acceptance in today's history-writing of the Ottoman Empire.

This shift of attitude is not limited to Ottoman studies. André Wink, a historian of South Asia, has noted a general tendency of present scholarship in the

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[16] According to Klaus Kreiser, 'Über den 'Kernraum' des Osmanischen Reiches', in: *Die Türkei in Europa,* edited by Klaus-Detlev Grothusen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), pp. 53–63, (pp. 53 ff), one might take the density of pious foundations *(vakf)* as a criterion for the definition of an Ottoman 'core area'. – The economic historian Şevket Pamuk applies the criterion of an Ottoman monetary system and again concludes that the Balkans, together with western & central Anatolia, were the core area of the Ottoman Empire, Şevket Pamuk, 'The Ottoman Monetary System and Frontier Territories in Europe, 1500–1700', in: *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities, and Political Changes,* edited by Kemal Karpat / Robert Zens (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press ,2003), pp. 175–182, (pp. 177, 179).

[17] Linda Darling, "Reformulating the Gazi narrative: When was the Ottoman state a Gazi State?", in: *Turcica. Revue d'Etudes Turques* 43 (2011): pp. 13–53 (p. 18).

Anglo-American academe to depict Islam in South Asia as "mystical and inclusive rather than Mecca-oriented, prophetic and exclusive. Sidestepping military history, it focuses above all on peaceful conversion, on Sufism, and on cultural syntheses of Indian art and literature with Islamic elements."[18] Wink goes even further to say that "recent scholarship in America (as well as elsewhere) on the Indo-Islamic world has produced a thoroughly sanitized perspective from which virtually all conflict is purged – except conflict generated by the West."[19]

Even if one shares Wink's observations, one has to be aware of the thorny issue of the term 'Islam', which tends to obfuscate our understanding of fundamental issues of Islamic history. The question of the nature of the expansion of the Islamic world is inherently connected with the question of what 'Islam' actually represents. Of all "the world's religious traditions the Islamic would seem to be the one with a built-in name",[20] raising problems of terminology such as differentiating between religious and socio-political aspects. We simply seem to have no word at our disposition other than 'Islam' when we want to speak about manifestations of Islamic societies and cultures. In order to avoid the conflation of everything related to Muslims and Islam as 'Islam', Marshall Hodgson proposed – with some lasting success – the adjective 'Islamicate' and the noun 'Islamhood'.[21] Hodgson wanted thus to enable us to speak about all those aspects of the Muslim world that are related to the history, culture, and economy of Muslims without having to refer again and again to the concept of 'Islam', so heavily burdened with religious-normative implications.[22]

Besides being beware of these pitfalls and fundamental problems of speaking in an appropriate way about Islamicate history, one must discuss where the limits might be transgressed in the way of over-contextualizing military ambition and its ideological-religious justification, which is often qualified or even glossed over it.

In recent decades historical research on the Ottoman Empire has shown convincingly that Wittek's *gazi* theory unduly forced the evidence. Rhoads

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[18] Andre Wink, *Perspectives on the Indo-Islamic World. Second Annual Levtzion Lecture, delivered 2 April 2006 at Tel Aviv University* (Jerusalem: The Nehemia Levtzion Center for Islamic Studies, 2007), p. 4.

[19] Wink, *Perspectives on the Indo-Islamic World,* p. 8.

[20] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (London: SPCK, 1978) (first published 1962), p. 80.

[21] Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization,* 3 vols.) Chicago, IL et al.: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

[22] See also Bruce B. Lawrence, 'Genius Denied and Reclaimed: A 40-Year Retrospect on Marshall G.S. Hodgson's The Venture of Islam', in: *Marginalia. A Los Angeles Review of Books Channel.* 11 November 2014, accessed on 15 February 2015 at: http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/retrospect-hodgson-venture-islam/.

Murphey, in his *Ottoman Warfare*, argues that for the Ottomans religion was largely a secondary. As the Ottoman army comprised the most heterogeneous elements, in particular many converts who had recently proclaimed their confession as Muslims, religion and ideology were subordinated to social and other concerns. In brief, to take *djhad* as an all-encompassing reason for warfare would be misleading, since "the guiding principles for an empire which, by 1500, had come to assume such global proportions were tolerance, pragmatism and stability."[23] Murphey rightly draws our attention to the fact that military motivation was not predominantly religious – or that, religious factors could at least coexist easily with more mundane motivations. As a second example: as everywhere, not only in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, business could easily take precedence over religion. Palmira Brummett has rightly drawn our attention to the nature of the Ottoman Empire as a 'merchant state', emphasizing this aspect over its belligerence: "Religion was a mobilizer of popular sentiment, a legitimizer of kingly commands, a customary tool for insulting rivals for political and economic sovereignty. [...] Thus, the Ottoman naval operations in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf after the conquest of Cairo were neither purely defensive nor purely a manifestation of gazi impulses. This is not to discount religion, Islam or Christianity, as a significant cultural force in the articulation of empire. It is rather to say that drawing the historiographic battle lines as religious boundaries obscures commercial and political motivation."[24] A third example: in general, we have to be aware of the fact that the concomitance of eruptions of violence and established routines of living side by side was a common pattern in the pre-modern world. "Violence was a sacred and systemic aspect of the coexistence of the majority and minorities. *Convivencia* was predicated upon violence; it was not its peaceful antithesis."[25]

Critical discussion of the importance of religious motivation, emphasizing commercial interests, overriding ideological-religious concerns and making ourselves aware of the ubiquity of violence are important contributions to a more detached and objective description of historically convoluted constellations, including the issue of the expansion of empires. What is problematic, however, is the act of interpreting Ottoman expansion only from the posterior viewpoint of later centuries of more or less peaceful forms of *convivencia* and

[23] Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500–1700* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), pp. 26, 30, 143, 155; citation on p. 144.

[24] Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 143f, 173.

[25] David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 245.

thus, by systematically using the 'neutral' and 'physical' term of 'expansion', tending to disregard the disruptive and devastating aspects of Ottoman conquest.[26]

In the recent *Cambridge History of Turkey* it is correctly argued that Ottoman conquests must be contextualized in the overall process of Ottoman expansion and a centuries-long presence in the Balkans: "[...] expansion must be measured in terms of tranquility, conversions or settled tax status as much as in terms of force of arms."[27] It is argued, furthermore, that the Ottoman Empire tied in with existing 'cultures of violence' and power relations: "Much of the conquered European territory was already accustomed to evolving rule, with a combination of local strongmen, assemblies of notables, and larger princes ruling from a distance and launching periodic invasions. The Ottomans did not break that mode of existence; rather they adapted it to their own system, manipulating local rule through backing or withdrawing support from notables and princes."[28] It is again correct to stress that there was no clear-cut divide between the Ottomans as alleged outsiders on the one hand and all the other participants as 'legitimate competitors' on the other.[29] What is largely missing in these contributions, however, is the simple statement that the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans were, in intermittent phases, repeatedly violent, killing tens of thousands of peoples and causing enormous losses of livelihood. By interpreting the phases of conquest by the *ex post* fact of an indeed *legitimate* rule of the Ottomans over the Balkans during the subsequent centuries, historiography of the Ottoman Empire comes dangerously close to the Ottomans' strategies of self-legitimization.

The Ottomans themselves stressed their belligerence. The self-image of the Ottomans as a conquering empire may have also been strengthened by the lack

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[26] See a series of articles, the titles of which all feature the term 'expansion', in: *The Cambridge History of Turkey, vol. 2: The Ottoman Empire as a World Power, 1453–1603*, edited by Suraiya N. Faroqhi / Kate Fleet (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2013): Palmira Brummett, 'Ottoman Expansion in Europe, ca. 1453–1606', pp. 44–73; Ebru Boyar, 'Ottoman Expansion in the East', pp. 74–140; Kate Fleet, 'Ottoman Expansion in the Mediterranean', pp. 141–172; Salih Özbaran, 'Ottoman Expansion in the Red Sea', pp. 173–201. – See also Kiel, *Incorporation of the Balkans*, with the curious variation of 'Ottoman Expansion into the Balkans' in the headline on the right-hand side.

[27] Brummett, *Ottoman Expansion in Europe*, p. 49.

[28] Brummett, *Ottoman Expansion in Europe,* p. 63.

[29] Fleet, *Ottoman Expansion in the Mediterranean*, pp. 147 f. – Matschke, a historian of the Byzantine Empire, with an otherwise clearly visible anti-Ottoman attitude, concedes that the local Byzantine-Christian populations saw in the Christian crusader campaigns (Nicopolis 1396, Varna 1444 etc.) an attempt to enforce papal religious supremacy and Latin political hegemony; Klaus-Peter Matschke, *Das Kreuz und der Halbmond. Die Geschichte der Türkenkriege* (Düsseldorf, Zürich: Artemis & Winkler, 2004), p. 150.

of a convincing descent from a religiously or historically important lineage. The Ottomans, as one of the major post-Mongol dynasties, were more dependent on military success as a central tenet of their legitimacy than the Safavids and the Mughals: "[…] the Ottomans, who could not claim descent from a famous conqueror or renowned ruling dynasty, gradually accumulated a charisma of success, while the Safavids, and especially the founder Isma'il, possessed the charisma of religious sanctity, and the Mughals – as they so often reminded themselves – enjoyed the charisma of dynastic prestige."[30] Furthermore, the early Turkic Muslims, in whose tradition the Ottomans also stood, probably did not understand *gaza* "in Islamic legal scholars' terms but as a new name for the raiding unconverted Turkic tribesmen engaged in and for their old image of heroism",[31] and, as such, "the ghaza would become a leitmotif in the Turks' reimagining of themselves in Islamic terms and in giving them a sense of common purpose that transcended tribal difference."[32]

THE OTTOMAN CONQUESTS IN THE BALKANS AND THE MASHREQ

One may observe that – amongst the manifold theatres of conquest in Anatolia, Southeastern Europe, in the Ottoman-Iranian borderlands and in the Eastern Arab world (Mashreq) – the case of eastern Anatolia is more similar to Ottoman expansion in the Balkans than the case of the Mashreq. In both regions, the Balkans and eastern Anatolia, we are faced with an ethnic shatter zone.[33] Furthermore, in both of these regions, Ottoman conquest was a gradual process, accompanied by the simultaneity of conviviality and fierce conflict. Upon closer inspection however, some differences come to the fore: In the case of eastern Anatolia we are faced with a kind of 'reconquest' by the Ottoman state, in the opposite direction to the first westward wave of Turkic conquest

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[30] Stephen Frederic Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 50. – In the following centuries the Ottomans based their legitimacy *inter alia* on the astonishing longevity of the empire. For an overview of Ottoman strategies of fostering the dynasty's legitimacy, see Hakan Karateke, 'Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate: A Framework for Historical Analysis', in: *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power,* edited by Hakan Karateke (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 13–52.

[31] Carter Vaughn Findley, *The Turks in World History* (Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 65.

[32] Findley, *The Turks in World History,* p. 58.

[33] On the use of the term 'shatter zone', see Ger Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo* (London: Hurst, 2000), pp. 9 f.

of Anatolia from the eleventh century onwards. As in the Balkans, expansion in eastern Anatolia led to the clash with the Safavids, who, like the Habsburgs, proved a powerful adversary.[34] Questions of religious propaganda were visible in relationships with the Safavids – on both sides: "Hamza Saru Görez, one of the eminent religious scholars of the period, issued a *fetva* defining the supporters of Isma'il as 'infidels and heretics', a description also applied to those who supported them, declaring it a duty and an obligatory act 'to destroy and disperse them'."[35] Under the Safavid Shah Tahmasp (reigned 1524–76), the "ritual cursing of these Caliphs [i.e. the first three Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman] was ordered to take place in mosques and public places throughout Iran and was enforced to some degree, by roving bands of religious inspectors."[36] In the treaty of Amasya in 1555, the victorious Ottomans demanded that the Safavids suppress the cursing of the first three Caliphs and Aisha, a stipulation that was renewed in the Ottoman-Safavid treaty of 1590. Besides the enormous strain on the Ottomans' resources and the massive logistical problems connected with warfare beyond Eastern Anatolia, the Ottomans shied away from 'religious wars' with the Safavids, with incalculable consequences for the social fabric of the Anatolian population.[37]

The Mamluks also regarded Eastern Anatolia as their sphere of interest, thus "[...]..) conflict with the Mamluks, despite initial cordial relations, was inevitable."[38] Indeed, there had been battles and conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and the Mamluks in eastern Anatolia in the fifteenth century. Perhaps the most important amongst the various Ottoman campaigns against the Mamluks was that of Bayezid II (reigned 1481–1512) in the years 1485–91, this war ending with a treaty that confirmed the status quo before the war. But the military campaigns of Selim I 'Yavuz' ('the Stern', reigned 1512–20) in the Mashreq very clearly were not primarily the consequence of a clash of interests in the region of eastern Anatolia; they were an outright military venture intended to acquire huge new territories for the Ottoman state that were to change fundamentally the demographic, religious, political and economic setup of the empire. Comparing the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and the Mashreq means examining two cases for the sake of differentiation. One may elucidate this argument by elaborating in some detail on three aspects: (a) time, (b) continuity vs. rupture and (c) conversion and religious identity.

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[34] Brummett, *Ottoman Expansion in Europe,* p. 45.
[35] Boyar, *Ottoman Expansion in the East*, p. 107.
[36] Dale, *Muslim Empires,* p. 90.
[37] Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare,* p. 173.
[38] Boyar, *Ottoman Expansion in the East*, p. 90.

(a) Time

The Ottoman expansion in the Balkans took place over an extended period and in an environment which had never been exposed to Islamicate institutions. In contrast, the Ottoman conquest of the major parts of the Eastern Arab world meant the incorporation of core regions of the Muslim world since the seventh century and it was completed in a very short period during one military campaign in 1516–17 under Sultan Selim I, in connection with four major battles at Marj Dabiq (in the vicinity of Aleppo) on 24 August 1516, at Khan Yunus, close to Gaza, on 21 December 1516, at al-Raydaniyya, in the vicinity of Cairo, on 22 January 1517 and finally at Giza on 27 March 1517. The two later battles of 1517 in Egypt brought about the complete military defeat and the collapse of the Mamluk state and the irreversible seizure of Mamluk lands by the Ottoman empire.[39] One may add that not all of the Ottoman possessions in the Mashreq were as easily acquired as Bilad al-Sham (Greater Syria) and Egpyt. Iraq, incorporated into the Ottoman Empire at a later stage, in the 1530s, under Süleyman the Magnificent (reigned 1520–66), continued to be an area contested with Iran until the final Ottoman conquest of Iraq in 1638. Yemen was conquered from the 1530s onwards, only to become lost again in the 1630s. But the overall picture of an enormously effective and swift conquest of Greater Syria and Egypt remains – with a lasting Ottoman presence in the core regions of the Mashreq until the end of World War I.

(b) Continuity vs. Rupture

What we had characterized in the introduction as the poles of a 'negative' and 'positive' interpretation concerning Islamicate expansion in general is repeated on a more local scale concerning the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans. The catastrophe theory is represented by, amongst others, the Bulgarian historian Hristo Gandev, who argued in 1972 that 40 per cent of the pre-Ottoman population were erased – through deportation, enslavement, killing and forced conversion.[40] Other historians, such as Konstantin Jireček (1854–1918), Nicolae Iorga (1871–1940) or İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı (1888–1977), have put forward, in varying versions, a 'blessing theory', stressing how much the Balkans

[39] Benjamin Lellouch / Nicolas Michel, 'Introduction: Les échelles de l'événement', in: *Conquête ottomane de l'Égypte (1517): arrière-plan, impact, échos,* edited by Benjamin Lellouch et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 1 f.

[40] Hristo Gandev, *Bŭlgarskata narodnost prez 15i vek. Demografsko i etnografsko izsledvane [The Bulgarian Nationality in the Fifteenth Century. A Demographic and Ethnographic Study],* Sofia 1972, as discussed by Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans. Kisve Bahası Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670–1730* (Leiden et al.: Brill, 2004), p. 30.

profited from the Ottoman conquest.[41] The 'classical modern approach', paradigmatically represented by Halil İnalcık, argues "that the Ottoman conquest was a gradual process, which was not driven by 'lust for booty' or by the will of the sultan." Nevertheless, as Anton Minkov rightly argues, "we can speak of the Ottomans 'liberating' Balkan peasants from their lords and 'lightening' their taxation burden only in the sense that, in being freed from unproductive labor, peasants had more time to invest in their farms."[42]

In the case of the Mashreq, different camps of interpretation are formed by the conflicting schools of nationalist historiography. Respected Arab historians of the older generation could not help but criticize the Ottoman neglect of the Arab provinces: "Throughout their rule, the Ottomans starting as ghazis (frontier-warriors for the faith) were very much involved in European politics, both as conquerors and losers, to the extent that not a single sultan ever went on the pilgrimage to the Hijaz despite the care and the protection they gave to the pilgrimage. To the Arab Muslims, the sultan was omnipotent but not omnipresent."[43]

In international academe today, the major dividing lines concerning the interpretation of the Ottoman conquest and subsequent rule of Egypt and beyond are to be found between the two schools of the 'Mamlukists' and 'Ottomanists'. The Mamlukists stress the continuity, particularly in Egypt, of the large households, owners of large estates and military units with the pre-Ottoman Mamluks. The Ottomanists on the other hand tend to stress the incorporation of Ottoman Egypt into the larger Ottoman context.[44] Indeed, the Mamluk elite was integrated to a large extent into the local Ottoman administration. This fusion of an Ottoman-Mamluk elite continued through the centuries. Ehud Toledano states for the nineteenth century that the Ottoman-Mamluk-Egyptian elite was imperial, universal and orientated towards Istanbul, but was also anchored in the major urban centers of Alexandria and Cairo.[45] "They spoke

[41] Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans, pp.* 31–32, citing the following works: Konstantin Jireček, *Geschichte der Bulgaren,* Prague 1876, pp. 284–296; idem: *Geschichte der Serben,* Gotha 1911, pp. 379–381; Nicolae Jorga, *Histoire des états balkanqiues,* Paris 1925, p. 25; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi,* Ankara 1947.

[42] Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans,* p. 32–33.

[43] Abdul-Karim Rafeq, The Arab States and Their Ottoman Heritage, in: *Die Staaten Südosteuropas und die Osmanen,* edited by Hans G. Majer (München: Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft, 1989), pp. 333–353, (p. 349).

[44] Klaus Kreiser, Christoph K. Neumann, *Kleine Geschichte der Türkei* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2003), p. 112.

[45] Ehud Toledano, 'Forgetting Egypt's Ottoman Past", in: *Cultural Horizons. A Festschrift in Honor of Talat S. Halman,* edited by Jayne L. Warner (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2001), pp. 150–167 (p. 165).

Ottoman Turkish, their outlook was formed in an Ottoman administrative and military tradition, they dressed and behaved as their counterparts in Istanbul, identified with the empire, but were totally loyal to the house of Muhammad Ali [...]."[46] Indeed, the house of Muhammad Ali (who ruled over Egypt in the years 1805–1848 in different official functions), which was finally abolished in 1953, may be regarded as the last 'Ottoman dynasty' – surviving the Ottomans for three decades.

Ami Ayalon supposes that Selim I spared the Mamluks because of (1) the extreme expansion of the Ottoman territory's overstretching the empire's resources, and also its administrative manpower, (2) the Safavids' looming large as a military menace, (3) the presence of the Portuguese in the Red Sea region and (4) the continuing Frankish presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. But Ayalon further argues that it was above all the cultural proximity of the Mamluks to the Ottomans that made them acceptable to the new rulers: "Of all the military elements which they subdued in their far flung drive into the Islamic countries, the Mamlūks were the most suitable for incorporation in the Ottoman army, because of their warlike ability, the common origin of the military slave systems in the two empires and the Turkish dialect spoken by those Mamlūks […]."[47] Mamluk administrative personnel installed by the Ottomans in Syria was erased by Süleyman I, quite obviously because of Syria's being strategically more exposed to (potential) enemies of the Ottoman empire.[48] On the whole, however, we may describe the Ottoman conquest of the Mashreq as a kind of 'internal regime change' among Muslim dynasties, meaning a much less decisive transformation than the Ottoman conquest meant for the Balkans.

(c) Conversion & religious identity

A substantial appreciation of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and the Mashreq is only possible in a broader temporal framework, particularly when it comes to the effect of religious identity and conversion. But from the outset we have to be aware that to "engage in discussion about belief, conviction, or religious identity in a secular age of postmodern scepticism is already fraught with

[46] Ehud Toledano, 'Social and Economic Change in the 'Long Nineteenth Century", in: *The Cambridge History of Egypt, vol. 2: Modern Egypt, from 1517 to the End of the Twentieth Century,* edited by M. W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 252–284, (p. 264).

[47] David Ayalon, 'The End of the Mamlūk Sultanate (Why did the Ottomans spare the Mamlūks of Egypt and wipe out the Mamlūks of Syria?)', in: *Islam and the Abode of War. Military Slaves and Islamic Adversaries,* edited by David Ayalon (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), pp. 125–148 (p. 127) [first published in: *Studia Islamica* 65 (1987): pp. 125–148].

[48] Ayalon, *The End of the Mamluk Sultanate*, p. 134.

infinite hazards, not least of which is the absence of an adequate vocabulary or language."[49] What we all certainly know in principle, namely that the military conquest of Muslim armies or the spreading of networks of Muslim merchants is only a first and preliminary step towards what one can conceive as the more thorough process of 'Islamization', we tend to forget in the everyday business of historiography. A vivid example for this act of negligence is a CD-Rom version of Hugh Kennedy's *The Cambridge Historical Atlas of Islam*.[50] When the CD is inserted, the automatic introduction shows the spread of Islam through the centuries as if a huge bucket of green color were spilt over large parts Africa and Asia, sparing only some small islands. Obviously, the spread of Islam is defined here by the date of battles and conquests of towns, implying that with the arrival of the Muslim rulers the lands became Muslim too. Richard Bulliet, in his seminal *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period,* has shown however that the peak of conversion in Iran was reached around 200 years after the conquest, and in the central Arab lands (such as Syria) even later.[51]

We are also aware that the process of conversion is a protracted one, reminiscent of Humphrey J. Fisher's second phase of 'mixing'. We are aware of the manifold phenomena of 'syncretism', recently replaced by more fashionable terms such as 'border zone', 'contact zone', 'shatter zone', and 'liminality'.[52] Syncretism may be regarded as a lubricating grease that allowed conversion processes to proceed smoothly. One should, however, be aware of the pitfalls of the term. Syncretism had to be defined by external actors, i.e. by religious authorities. Although today it is the scholars who assume this role of authority, attempts to systematize syncretism have not proven very successful.[53] Furthermore, by attributing 'syncretism' to all conversion processes that are not easily understandable, one tends to turn the concept into a kind of all-purpose explicator.[54]

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[49] Gauri Viswanathan, *Outside the Fold. Conversion, Modernity, and Belief* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. XIV.

[50] Hugh Kennedy, *The Cambridge Historical Atlas of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

[51] Richard Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period. An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge MA, London: Harvard University Press, 1979).

[52] Dominique-Silan Khan, *Crossing the Threshold. Understanding Religious Identities in South East Asia* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p. 5.

[53] See for example the theoretically ambitious, but ultimately unconvincing systematization attempted by Carsten Colpe, 'Syncretism', in: *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by Mircea Eliade (New York et al.: Macmillan, 1987), vol. 14, pp. 218–227; and idem, 'The Phenomenon of Syncretism and the Impact of Islam', in: *Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East*, edited by Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi et al. (Leiden et al.: Brill, 1997), pp. 35–48.

[54] See for this problematic approach the otherwise highly illuminating study of Bentley, *Old World Encounters*, pp. viii, 15 f, 19, 62, 76, 100.

Scholars have employed various ingenious terms to describe this state of in-betweenness. Kemal Kafadar has coined the apt term of *metadoxy* for Anatolia, "a state of being beyond doxies, a combination of being doxy-naive and not being doxy-minded, as well as the absence of a state that was interested in rigorously defining and strictly enforcing an orthodoxy."[55] Ger Duijzings has labelled Kosova a shatter zone: "Therefore, instead of perceiving Kosovo as Albanian 'ethnic' territory, I rather prefer to see it historically as an ethnic shatter zone, largely the product of incorporation into the Ottoman state, which embraced and preserved a great variety of ethnic and religious groups."[56] One may also recall the many cases in the Balkans of 'crypto-religious groups' living in a rural environment and being scattered over large areas. When observers coming from outside described certain parts of the rural population as 'crypto-religious', they may have provided us with mere 'snapshots' of the middle stage of a long and drawn-out transition to a complete Muslim identity. The only difference between an incomplete process of conversion and the existence of a crypto-religious group would then be that in the one case we are cognizant only of the result, that is, the state of completed conversion, whilst in other cases certain stages of transition are historically visible, so that we speak of 'crypto-Jews' and 'crypto-Christians'. Two historians of the Balkans, Georg Stadtmüller and Stavro Skendi, have even gone so far as to claim that everywhere in the Balkans where conversion to Islam took place one would have been able to find crypto-religious groups.[57]

The main period of conversion to Islam in the Balkans was in the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. In the fifteenth century, the percentage of those having converted to Islam was no more than 2.5 per cent, rising in the period 1520–1530 to 20 per cent of the population.[58] It was "the seventeenth century, when the rural population began to embrace Islam extensively, that may be deemed as the Balkan 'age of conversions'."[59] The time lag in the Ottoman Balkans between conquest and the peak of conversion thus corresponds very well with Richard Bulliet's observations on the process of conversion in Persia. One of the major peculiarities of the Ottoman Balkans, however, is that "the process of Islamization had either stopped or was about to stop in most

[55] Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 1995), p. 76.

[56] Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo,* p. 9.

[57] Georg Stadtmüller, 'Die Islamisierung bei den Albanern', in: *Jahrbücher für die Geschichte Osteuropas* 3 (1955): pp. 404–429, (p. 406); Stavro Skendi, Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans, in: *Slavic Review. American Quarterly of Soviet and East European Studies* 26.2 (1967): pp. 227–246, (p. 246).

[58] Minkov, *Conversion to Islam*, pp. 40–41

[59] Minkov, *Conversion to Islam,* p. 109.

of the Balkans by the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century".[60] This clear difference to the set pattern in the core regions of the Islamicate world is possibly due to the impact of rising European dominance and the Ottoman Empire's integration into a large globalizing European economy in the modern period.[61]

The Mashreq, on the other hand, had become a Muslim core area centuries before the Ottoman conquest. Christian, Jewish and other minorities, most of them Arabic-speaking, had attained a stable status as *dhimmi* groups within the dominant Muslim society. In the major cities of the Arabic-Muslim world "urban Christians and Jews had adapted to being governed by Muslim legal norms and categories. In the process, they assimilated the social distinctions and boundaries imposed by an Islamic world-view, as well as its language, as their own".[62] Again, in this respect, the argument of an internal regime change is convincing. The Ottoman rulers seamlessly continued with a policy of Sunni supremacy, tending to suppress only deviant groups within the Muslim community.[63]

CONCLUSION

When comparing the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and the Mashreq one might expect that such a contrasting examination of the scholarly literature would not only help us address the vexing question of to what extent the Balkan and Arab regions were concomitant and mutual parts of the Ottoman Empire, but also provide a deeper insight into how historical research on the Mashreq world weighs the effects of the'rupture' brought about by Ottoman conquest (which is quite obvious in the case of the Balkans). One would also expect to gain a better understanding of to what extent the factor of 'religion' was intrinsic to Ottoman expansion and rule. The results, however, seem to be rather inconclusive.

What we can state clearly is that the Balkan experience is more representative of the pervasive characteristics of Islamicate expansion on a global scale. The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans was a protracted process of expansion,

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[60] Minkov, *Conversion to Islam,* p. 60.

[61] Minkov, *Conversion to Islam,* p. 198, argues that economic reasons may have been decisive: A new class of successful Christian merchants emerged that no longer considered conversion to Islam economically rewarding.

[62] Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World. The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 5.

[63] Stefan Winter, 'The Kızılbaş of Syria and Ottoman Shiism', in: *The Ottoman World*, edited by Christine Woodhead (London et al.: Routledge, 2012), pp. 171–183.

with a distinct temporal gap between conquest and institutionalization of rule, including the phenomena of *mixing,* long drawn-out processes of conversion and 'Islamization'. We also observe, as in many other regions of Islamicate expansion, the simultaneity of violence and forms of conviviality (syncretism, sharing certain religious practices). One might thus argue that the Ottoman conquest of the Mashreq in the years 1516–17 is useful as a contrastive type: a conquest within a clearly limited time span based on a clearly defined number of sweeping battlefield victories. The character of an internal 'regime change' stands out clearly. The Ottoman conquest of the Arab lands, undertaken in the format of a large 'imperial campaign', enriches our understanding, but it is certainly not a valid 'counter model' to the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans.

Fred Donner, in his work on the early Muslim conquests, presents in the introduction various theories about the initial phase of the rise and expansion of the Islamic community from the 630s onwards. The theories presented run the gamut from 'deterministic' to 'accidentalistic' interpretations. Whereas Leone Caetani in 1911 saw the early Islamic military campaigns motivated by a drought in Arabia, George-Henri Bousquet argued in 1956 that the important factor was religious commitment, "for even those lured on by promises of booty became caught up in the religious enthusiasm of the new faith once on the battlefield."[64] Francesco Gabrieli again drew our attention to the fact that after the *ridda* wars, i.e. the wars against those who had defected from Islam after Muhammad's death in 632, Arabia "was seething with arms and armed men: the victors, no less than the vanquished, needed an outlet for their surplus energies […]".[65] On the whole, having reviewed the extant literature on the early Islamic conquests, Donner notes a "general lack of consensus over the nature and causes of the Islamic conquest movement",[66] and has to conclude that "the true causes of the Islamic conquests – current in the minds of men – will probably remain forever beyond the grasp of historical analysis".[67]

There is no reason to be so fatalistic when it comes to the historical analysis of the Ottoman conquests. Given the far greater amount of sources, written from multifold perspectives, we know a lot more about the nature of the Ottoman expansion than about that of the very early Islamic conquests. It is remarkable however that not only has the Ottoman conquest of the Mashreq

[64] Fred McGraw Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 5.
[65] Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, p. 6.
[66] Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, p. 7.
[67] Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests,* p. 271.

drawn little attention – compared to the case of the Balkans –,[68] but scholars have never taken the case of the Mashreq into consideration when trying to develop an overall model for explaining Ottoman 'modes of conquest'. Models of explanation for the nature of Ottoman conquest are still largely developed using the example of the Balkans. Historiography once again follows the Ottoman example: We see here a further striking example of the overall tendency for the precepts of Ottoman political thought to be predicated on the experiences in the Balkan regions.

[68] The collective volume by Benjamin Lellouch / Nicolas Michel, *Conquête ottomane de l'Égypte,* being a major exception and thus also an important improvement.

Before and After the Battle of Maritsa (1371): The Significance of the Non-Ottoman Factors in the Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans

Toni Filiposki

The fourteenth century is the time of many important developments in Balkan history. But one can rightfully say that the century was foremost marked by the Ottoman conquests. Expansionist politics was the central feature of the Ottoman Turks was and the main characteristic of nomadic societies. The consistency of that policy and the circumstances favourable to it enabled what at the end of the thirteenth century had been the relatively small Ottoman Beylik in Asia Minor to grow in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries into a real empire that spread over three continents. Their conquests in the Balkans in the second half of the fourteenth century contributed especially to the development and territorial expansion of the Ottoman state. The Ottoman conquests are usually divided into two major phases: 1. the period between 1352 (the conquering of the small fortification of Tzyimpe, on the Gallipoli Peninsula) and 1371 (the Battle of Maritsa) and 2. between 1371 and 1402 (the Battle of Ankara). During the following period the conquests continued (they are not the subject of our research), and their greatest success is considered to be the conquering of the Byzantine capital in 1453. Certainly, the Ottomans significantly influenced those developments, but for a millennium-old empire such as Byzantium to be conquered and destroyed it required more than military aggression. Hence, in considering how this came about, one might examine the significance and the role of the numerous non-Ottoman factors for the success of the Ottoman conquests.

1. NON-OTTOMAN FACTORS BEFORE THE BATTLE OF MARITSA

1.1. The Byzantine factors before the Battle of Maritsa

In 1261 the Byzantine Empire was renewed. But the Fourth Crusade had an enduring negative impact on the development of the state. The internal decentralisation, the economic and social crisis and the territorial losses were part of those consequences. That brought about a constant and irretrievable decline

in its military-economic resources. In the previous period, the spacious and rich territories in Asia Minor had been of vital importance for the survival and development of the Byzantine state, but in the period from the end of the thirteenth century until the 1330s, Byzantium lost these territories in Asia Minor.[1] So in considering factors that had a direct impact on the start of the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans one must emphasise the Byzantine military powerlessness and the loss of rule in Asia Minor.

Some of the other Byzantine factors that had a positive impact on the beginning of the Ottoman conquests were the five civil wars in Byzantium between 1321 and 1357 and the resultant loss of territories and the threats emanating from its Balkan neighbours, Serbia and Bulgaria. For these reasons the representatives of the Byzantine authorities or their pretenders started to call on their former enemies, the Turkish Beyliks from Asia Minor, this time as their allies.

As a matter of fact the main foreign policy goals of Byzantium after the loss of its territories in Asia Minor comprised: 1. disabling the transfer and settling of Turks in the Balkans (1332 and 1341, two attempts to conquer Gallipoli that failed) and 2. the regaining of the lost Balkan territories (the Byzantine Emperor Andronikos III and John Kantakouzenos, with the help of the Aydin Turks, temporarily regained Epirus, Thessaly and Southern Albania).[2] To achieve the second goal, involvement of Turks was inevitable, but for diplomatic reasons in the beginning they were not Ottoman Turks. Because of the imminent threat from the Ottoman Turks, Byzantium established an alliance with the Aydin and Saruhan Beyliks, counting on a triple alliance: 1. against the Ottoman Turks; 2. against the maritime hegemony of Venice and Genoa; and 3. against the Balkan states. To that end, especially close alliances were established with the Emir of Aydin, Umur Pasha. But the problems began when the Turkish allies, in addition to being drawn on for the foreign policy goals, were also summoned for the internal battles for the throne, the civil wars. The first to do so was John Kantakouzenos, during the Civil War of 1341–1347, when as a pretender to the Byzantine throne he called on his Muslim ally Umur to help him. The sources tell us that in 1342–1346 military units of Aydin Turks ravaged Byzantium's Thrace and destroyed the state of the Bulgarian Bolyar Momčilo in the Southern

[1] Hristo Matanov/ Rumjana Mihneva, *Ot Galipoli do Lepanto-Balkanite, Evropa i osmanskoto našestvie-1354–1571 g.*, (Sofia: Nauka i iskustvo 1988), pp. 24–26; Radivoj Radić, *Vreme Jovana V Paleologa (1332–1391)*, (Belgrade: Vizantološki institut SANU 1993), pp. 58–63, 72–75; *The Cambridge History of Turkey-Byzantium to Turkey 1071–1453*, Volume 1, edited by Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009), pp. 120–123.

[2] Matanov/ Mihneva, *Ot Galipoli do Lepanto*, pp. 26–27.

Rhodopes.[3] That is probably another fact that must be noted: the involvement of the Turkish allies in the civil wars in Byzantium.

The practice also continued in the following decades in Byzantium. Although it was practised by many Byzantine ruler and/or pretenders (until the recognition of the Ottoman vassaldom), the first person to call on the Turkish allies to fulfil his political ambitions, and indeed to do so frequently, was John Kantakouzenos. Some hold that he is the historical person most responsible for the start of Turkish penetration into the European Continent. This view seems to be supported if we mention that the arrival of the first Ottoman armies in the Balkans was linked to the same historical person. Namely, in 1346 John Kantakouzenos replaced his Turkish allies. Because the Aydin Turks were in decline, he forged an alliance with the Ottoman Emir Orhan (1326–1359).[4] In that way, that Ottoman Turks entered the Balkans for the first time. Hence, John Kantakouzenos is the factor that contributed directly for the future success of the Ottoman Turks. During his rule (1347–1354) the Ottoman Turks passed from Asia to Europe with no special effort and were used by Byzantium to for stop the Bulgarians and to regain the territories they lost to Dušan's Serbia. That was another factor contributing to the success of the Ottoman conquests.

In a situation of internal instability, the Ottoman troops were totally out of control, looting the Byzantine territories. After the brief break in the alliance with the Ottomans, John Kantakouzenos was once again forced to ask for their help in fighting John V during the new civil war in Byzantium. He emerged victorious from the Battle of Didymoteichon (1352) with the help of the Ottoman Turks. As a direct consequence of this battle, the Ottoman Turks felt encouraged to conquer the Byzantine fortification of Tzympe (on the Gallipoli Peninsula), which was the first Ottoman conquest in the Balkans and Europe. While in the following two years Kantakouzenos tried by means of negotiations and payments to persuade the Ottoman Turks to return the Tzympe fortification to the Byzantine authorities, by taking the advantage of the earthquake that struck the Balkans in 1354 the Ottomans also conquered the fortification of Gallipoli. This caused great panic in Constantinople. The civil war ended, John V regained power, Kantakouzenos was forced to abdicate (December 1354), but the consequences were catastrophic and far-reaching.

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[3] K. A. Žukov, *Egejskie emiraty v XIV–XV vv.* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo "Nauka" 1988), pp. 39–44; Ivan Božilov / Vasil Gjuzelev, *Istorija na srednovekovna Bălgarija VII-XIV vek, Istorija na Bălgarija v tri toma*, vol. I (Sofia: Anubis 1999), pp. 595–597.

[4] D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453* (Second Edition) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999), pp. 203–204, 218; Georgije Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantije* (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga 1959), 484; Radić, *Vreme Jovana V Paleologa*, pp. 155–157.

One can say that the Civil War of 1352–1354 was the non-Ottoman factor that had the greatest direct impact on the first Ottoman conquests in the Balkans.

Until the summer of 1357 the entire Gallipoli Peninsula was under the Ottoman power. During that time it was of vital significance for Byzantium to undertake decisive military-diplomatic steps against the Ottoman Turks. The developments that followed show that certain attempts were made to oppose them, but at the same time there was fear of undertaking the wrong measures. According to Kantakouzenos' assessment, just before his abdication (1354), a Byzantium, lacking funds, a sufficiently strong ally and a fleet, was not in a situation to put up military resistance to the Turks and consequently they had to negotiate their withdrawal from Thrace.

However, during this period Byzantine society was profoundly divided. One might identify three orientations in Byzantine foreign policy: 1. pro-Latin/anti-Ottoman; 2. pro-Ottoman/anti-Latin; and 3. anti-Latin/anti-Ottoman. However, after the anti-Ottoman position began to dominate the Byzantine ruling circles, they were further divided when it came to selecting their allies: were they to be western or Balkan? The Byzantine emperor was more inclined towards the pro-western policy, even though this enjoyed less support from society. This should be considered a factor that had a positive impact on the Ottoman conquests; namely, John's V expectations of receiving western support proved to be illusory (due to disunity and different interests).[5] The orientation of the Byzantine ruler had a significant impact on the failure of the attempts to establish the Balkan anti-Ottoman alliance (of Byzantium, Bulgaria and Serbia).

At the end of the 1350s Byzantium had an unexpected opportunity either to stop the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans or at least to prolong them in the long term. In 1357 the Ottoman emir Orhan suffered a great personal loss. His son Suleiman, the conqueror of Gallipoli, died suddenly and his other son Halil was captured and imprisoned in Phokaia. The Byzantine Emperor John V agreed to mediate for the liberation of Halil and in return he received reassurances that the further conquests in Thrace would stop. Paying a high price (failed military intervention in 1358 and a ransom of 100,000 perpers) Byzantium managed to free Halil and soon afterwards, he became a Byzantine son-in-law by marrying the underage Princess Irene.[6] It seemed that through the marriage of the two ruling families the Ottoman conquests would be stopped

[5] Nevra Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins Politics and Society in the Late Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009), pp. 3–5.

[6] Halil Inaldžik, *Osmanliskata imperija: klasično doba, 1300–1600*, (Skopje: Slovo 2004), p. 14; Matanov/ Mihneva, *Ot Galipoli do Lepanto*, 41–42; Radić, *Vreme Jovana V Paleologa*, pp. 283–285.

for a long time to come. But it did not happen like that. At the end of 1359 Princess Irene Palaiologos died suddenly and Halil returned to Bursa. So one can say that the failed marriage of the dynasties was another factor that had an impact on the Ottoman conquests.

At the end of 1359 the Ottoman conquests in Thrace continued, led by Orhan's third son, Murad. In the very same year, the Turks reached the fortification of Constantinople for the first time, but at the time they had neither the intention of conquering it nor the capacity to do so. But the very appearance of the Turks before the Byzantine capital symbolically meant the continuation and intensifying of the conquests. The goal was to conquer Eastern Thrace and thus to cut off Constantinople from the Thracian and Macedonian territories and to cut off the land communication between Byzantium and Bulgaria. Even though the chronology of the Ottoman conquests of the Thracian cities and fortifications is insufficiently precise, it is very possible that in the period from 1359–1371 the Turks achieved their goal (Adrianople/Edirne, which would become the first Ottoman centre in the Balkans, was conquered around 1369). The Byzantine reigns in Thrace (Constantinople and its hinterland) and Southeast Macedonia (Thessaloniki and its hinterland) were physically separated, thus significantly broadening the Ottoman seizure the Balkans. Byzantium did not organise or take part in any more serious anti-Ottoman initiatives or military campaigns (1359–1371). That decision was a mitigating factor for the Ottoman expansion.

1.2. Bulgarian, Serbian and other non-Ottoman factors before the Battle of Maritsa

Faced with the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans, Serbia and Bulgaria were in a very similar position. Just like Byzantium, they too found themselves in a process of decentralisation and decline. But before that the two Balkan states reached their maximum in regard to territorial expansions to the detriment of Byzantium. The Serbian expansionist policy towards the Byzantine territories in Macedonia started in 1282 with King Milutin, and reached its culmination during the reign of King/Tsar Dušan (1331–1355). By taking advantage of the Civil War of 1341–1347 in Byzantium, the Serbs finalised their territorial expansions towards the south (from 1343–1348 the Byzantine territories in Albania, Southeast Macedonia, Epirus and Thessaly were conquered).[7] The Bulgarian ruler John Alexander (1331–1371) also took advantage of the Civil War

[7] *Istorija srpskog naroda, Prva knjiga (Od najstarijih vremena do Maričke bitke 1371 g.)*, edited by Sima Ćirković (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga 1981), pp. 511–523 (BožidarFerjančić), pp. 541–544 (Sima Ćirković / Rade Mihaljčić).

in Byzantium for the territorial expansion of his country (in 1344 Byzantium agreed to hand over nine of its cities and fortifications in Thrace and Northern Rhodopes).[8]

Initially Byzantium's exposure to the Ottoman pressure suited both Bulgaria and Serbia. The silent Bulgarian-Serbian anti-Byzantine alliance should be considered a factor in the Ottoman conquests. The first Turkish penetrations into the Bulgarian and Serbian territories were for looting and were supported by the Byzantine pretender to the throne, Kantakouzenos, in the 1340s. Only after the Turks took over Gallipoli were attempts made to forge a Balkan anti-Ottoman alliance. But those attempts did not last, had no intensity and no prospects of practical implementation. In 1355, just before the end of his life and reign, the Serbian Tsar Dušan attempted to organise a crusade against the Turks with the support of the Avignon Pope. Because of the geographical position in that period, Bulgaria was much more exposed to the Ottoman attacks than Serbia. As the Ottoman pressure and conquests continued, the process of internal decentralisation and anarchy increased. On the eve of the Battle of Maritsa, neither Serbia nor Bulgaria were centralised states. After the death of Dušan (1355) the unstoppable process of the weakening and disintegration of the Serbian state began. Many "small states" were formed. On the territory of Macedonia the most powerful states were those of the brothers Volkašin and Uglješa (the Prilep Kingdom and Serres despotate).[9] In Bulgaria during the same period the former state was already divided into three parts: the kingdoms of Tărnovo and Vidin and the state of Dobrudža. The weakening and the disintegration of Bulgaria and Serbia into smaller military-political entities was a favourable factor for the Ottoman conquests.

1.3. Attempts to form anti-Ottoman alliances and the Battle of Maritsa

It seemed that before 1354–55 there were no elementary conditions for creating a Balkan anti-Ottoman coalition (between Byzantium, Serbia and Bulgaria). However in the sources from 1351 one such attempt is documented. The frequent lootings by the Ottoman armies that acted as Byzantine allies on the Bulgarian and Serbian territories (1349–50) seems to have exceeded Byzantine expectations. Hence, Kantakouzenos sent separate offers to the Bulgarian and Serbian rulers to conclude anti-Ottoman alliances. John Alexander initially accepted the Byzantine offer, but later he was convinced by Dušan to the contrary

[8] Božilov/Gjuzelev, *Istorija na srednovekovna Bălgarija,* vol. I, p. 596.

[9] Kosta Adžievski, *Pelagonia vo sredniot vek (Od doagjanjeto na Slovenite do pagjanjeto pod turska vlast)* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija 1994), pp. 209–236; Georgije Ostrogorski, *Serska oblast posle dušanove smrti* (Belgrade: Vizantološki institut SANU 1960), pp. 3–41, 80–103.

and both rejected them.[10] The reasons for that epilogue should be sought in the lack of mutual trust and political short-sightedness. Afterwards Kantakouzenos continued the alliance with the Turks that had catastrophic consequences (the Ottoman conquests of Tzympe and Gallipoli). The main factors that prevented the creation of the anti-Ottoman coalition were: 1. the civil wars in Byzantium and the pro-Ottoman orientation of John Kantakouzenos, and 2. the irreconcilable struggle for Byzantine territories between Serbia and Bulgaria. However, following the end of the Bulgarian (1344) and Serbian (1348) territorial expansions, the increased Ottoman threat to the Bulgarian and Serbian territories, the first Ottoman conquests in the Balkans (1352 and 1354) and the abdication of Kantakouzenos (1354) created a favourable environment for the creation of an anti-Ottoman military alliance. In the summer of 1355 a Byzantine-Bulgarian alliance was created with an anti-Ottoman foundation. The sources do not offer any information concerning the practical effects and joint actions against the Ottoman Turks. In the early 1360s Byzantine-Bulgarian relations deteriorated again, and in 1364 there was even an open military clash between them.[11] This time the Bulgarian tsar was forced to ask for military assistance from the Turks. The Bulgarian-Byzantine conflict ended without a victor and only contributed to the further weakening of Bulgaria and Byzantium, which was definitely beneficial to the Turks.

The regulating of Byzantine-Serbian relations was even more frought. In 1350 the Constantinople Patriarch Kallistos anathematised the Serbian Tsar Dušan and the Patriarch Joanikije for their illegal taking of higher titles. Indeed, for Byzantium that was the only possible response to the great territorial losses. In 1355 Dušan made a diplomatic attempt to overcome the Church schism and for reconciliation. But the condition laid down by Byzantium (the returning of the conquered territories and the relinquishing of the titles) did not offer any possibility for compromise. After the death of Dušan in 1355 a certain thaw in the mutual relations was noted, but it did not turn into an anti-Ottoman alliance.

The questions that arise are why after the Ottoman conquest of Gallipoli were the deep conflicts were not overcome and why was an anti-Ottoman alliance not formed? There is no easy answer to these questions. But one needs to bear in mind that the objective answer depends mostly on the methodological use of one of the two discourses: retrospective or historical. According to the retrospective discourse the mutual contradictions and animosities should not have represented the main obstacle for the anti-Ottoman unification in those crucial years. But again one should not forget that the ruling circles in Byzan-

[10] Matanov/ Mihneva, *Ot Galipoli do Lepanto*, pp. 32–34.
[11] Matanov/ Mihneva, *Ot Galipoli do Lepanto*, pp. 38–39.

tium, Serbia and Bulgaria of the times (the mid-fourteenth century) would not have been able to know that they should have stopped the expansion of an Ottoman state that would turn into a huge empire. Hence, if one examines the question of the historical perspective then the reasons for the failure to create a Balkan anti-Ottoman coalition were completely realistic and objective; the military-diplomatic behaviour of Byzantium and of the other Balkan states at the time of the Ottoman threat was absolutely common and standard and had been applied for centuries in similar cases of external threats. But still it is important to emphasise that the creation of a practical anti-Ottoman coalition required sufficient military-political and economic capacities of each potential participant in the coalition. Those capacities seem to have been exhausted and on unsatisfactory level, and were thus one of the main historical factors that prevented the creation of the anti-Ottoman coalition.

Until then the most serious attempt to prevent the Ottoman conquering of the Balkans came from Despot Jovan Uglješa, and not from Byzantium. With the separation of the Serbian state in 1359–1360 the Serres Principality was formed by the widow-Tsarina Elena. As soon as 1365 power was taken over by Jovan Uglješa. At that time the Ottoman Turks with their conquests pushed towards the Rhodope coastline and Southeast Macedonia. In that way due to the direct threat the important city of Serres became the centre of the anti-Ottoman resistance. In 1364 the first attempt at reconciliation and alliance between Serres and Constantinople was made. The Byzantine emissaries were headed by the Constantinople Patriarch Kallistos, who personally went to Serres. But during the negotiations Kallistos suddenly died and the negotiations failed. In the coming period the idea of an anti-Ottoman alliance did not disappear, mostly because of the persistence of Jovan Uglješa. But it seemed that on the other side there was no sincere commitment. From 1366 until 1371, Uglješa made constant attempts to win over Byzantium for a kind of a "crusade" to eastern Thrace towards Edirne. Regardless of the significant retreats and the recognition of the Byzantine Church authority as a necessary condition of a potential military-political alliance, Uglješa was faced with intentional stalling and indecisiveness. It was not until the summer of 1371 that the political negotiations started, when Uglješa asked to establish family relations and for funding assistance for the fight against the Turks. Still, his demands were not acceptable to the Byzantine secular and Church circles, despite the distinct political realism of Demetrios Kydones, who reasoned that at that moment a Balkan anti-Ottoman alliance would be useful to Byzantium.[12]

[12] Ostrogorski, *Serska oblast*, 133–140; Hristo Matanov, *Jugozapadnite bălgarski zemi prez XIV vek* (Sofia: Nauka i iskustvo 1986), pp. 101–110; Aleksandar Atanasovski, *Makedonia vo XIV vek* (Tetovo: Napredok 2009), pp. 178–184.

Uglješa probably sent similar proposals to the other Balkan rulers. But the diplomatic efforts of the Serres despot remained fruitless. Nevertheless, in the spring of 1371 Uglješa began preparations for the final battle and for that he was able to count only on his powerful brother, King Volkašin. In late August and early September 1371, the armies of the two brothers united and advanced towards eastern Thrace, reaching the lower flow of Maritsa River. Even though the count of 60,000 troops seems too high, there is no doubt that at that point it was the most numerous Balkan army ever to oppose the Turks. There are no rich details about the battle itself, but on 26 September near the Thrace Fortification of Černomen the strong army of Volkašin and Uglješa was ambushed by an Ottoman unit and soon afterwards suffered a heavy defeat. Both brothers were killed on the battlefield, as were most of their army. That was the end of the first serious attempt by the Balkan Christians to stop the Ottoman advance into the Balkans.[13] As one of the reasons for the defeat one should point out the response of the Balkan rulers to the call for anti-Ottoman action, especially that of Byzantium, which seems to have predicted such an epilogue; thus neither before nor after the Battle of Maritsa did it dare to initiate or participate in a direct conflict against the Ottoman Turks.

2. THE NON-OTTOMAN FACTORS AFTER THE BATTLE OF MARITSA

The Ottoman victory in the large battle of 1371 did not result in immediate territorial gains, contrary to the broadly accepted opinion in historiography. It is believed that after the battle the Turks conquered several fortifications in North-eastern Thrace, reached the Stara Planina and began to conquer the Sofia valley. On the other hand they did not hold on to their conquests of parts of the defeated Serres state for a long time, and their attacks on Athos and Thessaloniki were stopped. The consequences were only prolonged, but were of great significance. With the increase in Ottoman military-political capacities the pressure on the Christian territories in the Balkans grew. In the last quarter of the century the process of decentralisation and feudal fractioning reached its peak. This was partly due to an external factor (Ottoman pressure), but it was primarily caused by the internal social rules. Hence one could speak of the opposite tendency: the stronger the Ottoman factor became, the more the non-Ottoman factors weakened. It was an additional alleviating circumstance for the further Ottoman conquests.

[13] Ostrogorski, *Serska oblast*, pp. 127–46; Matanov/ Mihneva, *Ot Galipoli do Lepanto*, pp. 49–50.

The period after 1371 in the Balkans is known for the imposition of Ottoman suzerainty or acceptance of Ottoman vassaldom, which was the crucial transitional stage for more successful continuation of Ottoman conquests. According to the Ottoman perspective, this interim solution was applied because of two factors that at first sight appear contradictory but which are in fact related. On the one hand the evident Ottoman superiority, but on the other the inability to risk the direct military conflict that would be entailed in conquering the entire Christian world. In the Balkan-Christian perspective, the acceptance of vassal dependence on the Ottoman Turks had positive effects in the constant battles for domination and survival among the small and weak Balkan feudal rulers. Thus they were spared the Ottoman looting, they maintained certain dynamics in their political activity, and certainly they believed that it was an imposed and temporary solution.

2.1. Byzantium: the Ottoman vassal

It might seem strange but the outcome of the Battle of Maritsa also had positive effects for Byzantium. In the period of 1371–1373 the emperor's son, Manuel Palaiologos, managed to conquer cities and regions (Serres, areas around the river Strumica, Chalkidike up to Beroia) in South-eastern Macedonia (the former Serres state).[14] The Byzantine expansions were feeding false expectations that it was the time for political and military renewal. As a matter of fact the very opposite happened and these actions of Byzantium were a factor that had a positive impact on the Ottoman conquests for a long time to come. Quite absurdly, but in parallel with the Byzantine conquests in South-eastern Macedonia in the spring of 1373, the Byzantine emperor John V was on a military campaign in Asia Minor, but as an Ottoman ally. That is the earliest piece of information we have concerning the regulated relations between Byzantium and the Ottoman Turks. There are indirect western sources from 1375 that call this alliance vassaldom. However, the question is whether in 1372–1373 an alliance was agreed that around 1375 grew into a vassaldom of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks or whether the vassaldom was imposed immediately, John V and his closest collaborators managing to keep it secret until 1375 and present it as an alliance. It is difficult to give a definite answer to this question, but it is certain that as time passed the vassal dependence of Byzantium was unavoidable and increasingly evident. The earliest concrete reports about the vassal obligations of Byzantium towards the Ottomans date from 1379 (30,000

[14] Hristo Matanov, „Contribution to the Political History of Southeastern Macedonia after the Battle of Chernomen", *Études Balkaniques*, 1986/2, p. 31.

perpers and 12,000 vassal troops).[15] The Civil War of 1373–1376 additionally weakened Byzantium and deepened its vassal dependency. Andronikos IV, the son of John V, managed to take over the throne (1376) from his father with Ottoman help. The next year as a token of gratitude the Byzantine emperor gave the fortification of Gallipoli to the Ottomans.[16] The voluntary handing over of the Gallipoli fortification was a factor that influenced the additional intensification of the Ottoman conquests. The other territories under Byzantine rule (Thessaloniki with parts of Southeast Macedonia and Morea), despite being formally under Byzantine rule, actually led an independent life, without the obligation of recognising Ottoman vassaldom. This especially refers to Morea, since in 1376 Thessaloniki was placed under Ottoman vassaldom.

In 1382 the emperor's son, Manuel Palaiologos and a group of followers left the capital, fortified themselves in Thessaloniki and rejected Ottoman vassal dependency. Some smaller victories of his against the Ottomans (from late 1382 to early 1383) and the expansion of the anti-Ottoman influence in Northern Greece have been noted. The Ottomans immediately responded decisively and from the end of 1383 until April 1387 the city of Thessaloniki was completely blocked. It took the Ottomans three and a half years to gain control over the city, and only after forcing Manuel, the emperor of the "New Empire" to leave the city. It is believed that the motivation for this unplanned attempt at anti-Ottoman resistance was "Romaioi" patriotism and unrealised ruling ambitions.[17]

2.2. The other Balkan territories: Ottoman vassaldoms and conquests

The period of the 1370s following the Battle of Maritsa represented a turning point, with important developments linked to the territorial expansion of the Ottoman vassaldom and conquests. After conquering the Sofia valley, in 1377–1378 the Turks managed to impose their vassal dependency on Constantine Dragaš (Eastern Macedonia) and Ivan Šišman (Tărnovo-Bulgaria), and few years earlier on Ivan Stracimir (Vidin-Bulgaria). Those were the years when the Thrace's city of Edirne (Adrianople) became the first Ottoman centre in the Balkans. The status and the fall of the Prilep King Marko (western Macedonia) under Ottoman vassal dependency is still the subject of scholarly debate. It is possible that it did not happen that early.[18] A decade after the Battle of Maritsa,

[15] Radić, *Vreme Jovana V Paleologa*, pp. 358–64; Matanov/Mihneva, *Ot Galipoli do Lepanto*, pp. 59–62.

[16] Nicol, *Last Centuries of Byzantium*, 280–81; Radić, *Vreme Jovana V Paleologa*, pp. 370–375, 383–387.

[17] Matanov/ Mihneva, *Ot Galipoli do Lepanto*, pp. 73–75.

[18] Adžievski, *Pelagonija vo sredniot vek*, pp. 268–281.

its real consequences became evident. The Ottoman vassals were: Byzantium (without Morea), the feudal rulers in eastern Macedonia and Tărnovo and Vidin Bulgaria. In the beginning of the 1380s a new phase of Ottoman expansion into the Balkans began, along the two main land routes: 1. to the northwest of Sofia towards Nish and Morava Serbia, and 2. to the west of Thessaloniki towards southern Macedonia, northern Greece and Albania.

Initially Manuel and the developments in Thessaloniki prevented the planned conquests along the Via Egnatia (from Thessaloniki towards Dyrrachion). In no case that did mean a complete halt to the activities. In 1383 the important city of Serres fell under Ottoman rule, and in 1385 a blitz campaign was carried out across Macedonia up to Albania.[19] It seems that one should link the recognition of the Ottoman vassal rule of King Marko and some other nobles from Macedonia and Albania with the Ottoman penetration in 1385. After the fall of Thessaloniki (1387), the establishing of vassal rule by the Turks became even more dynamic and it was not always a result of direct military pressure. Until the early 1390s an entire conglomerate of principalities in Macedonia, Albania, continental Greece and parts of the Peloponnese recognised their Ottoman vassal status. The only exceptions were Coron and Modon (under Venice); Corinth (under the Knights Hospitaller) and parts of northern Albania. By imposing Ottoman hegemony from Zeta up to the Peloponnese this stage of conquests was completed in a triumphal manner.

At the same time the Turks advanced towards Sofia, Nish and Serbia. The tendency of the Ottoman actions in the 1380s was to surround Serbia and northern Macedonia. The Ottoman conquest of Sofia in 1385 should be understood as the beginning of the Serbian-Ottoman conflict. The very next year Nish fell, where the most prominent person in Raška (Morava-Serbia), Prince Lazar, made an alliance that was soon broken. The same year (1386) Murad personally led an Ottoman campaign, but he was stopped and defeated near Pločnik. Both sides began to prepare for the decisive battle. Prince Lazar managed to secure the support of the Bosnian king Tvrtko and Vuk Branković, and Murad's call to arms was headed by his vassals Constantine Dragaš and Ivan Stracimir. Due to the Ottomans' defeat near Bileća in Bosnia (1388) the Ottoman campaign against Serbia was postponed for a year. The developments in the summer of 1389 ended with the Battle of Kosovo.

There are many myths and legends surrounding this battle that have been debated by historians to this very day. The number of contemporary sources

[19] Georgije Ostrogorski, „Tursko osvajanje Sera". *Vizantija i Sloveni*, Sabrana dela vol. 4 (Belgrade: Prosveta 1970), pp. 244–248, 251, 255; Aleksandar Stojanovski, *Gradovite na Makedonija od krajot na XIV do XVII vek – demografski proučuvanja*, (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija 1981), pp. 10–14; Adžievski, *Pelagonija vo sredniot vek*, pp. 271–275.

is small, and most of the sources are from later periods. What is considered relevant is that Murad went from Plovdiv via Ihtiman-Kjustendil and Kratovo to Kosovo, where a Christian army led by Lazar waited for him. In the battle Murad was killed by Miloš Obilić, and Lazar was captured and killed by the Turks. Some of the contemporary sources state that the Serbs won, while the later sources state that it was the Turks who won. In this case it is hard to be objective and to establish the victor. However, it is probable that in this battle both sides had significant losses and that the battle remained undecided. That outcome would later prove to equate to a defeat for the Christians. Due to the Hungarian threat at the end of 1389, Lazar's successors were forced to accept vassal dependency on the new Ottoman sultan Bayezid (1389–1402). During the reign of this powerful ruler many changes occurred in the military-political course of the state limiting and/or terminating the vassal rights and obligations of the vassal Balkan territory. The ultimate goal was to place them under direct Ottoman power. That policy was diligently and successfully implemented during the 1390s. In 1393–94 at the Assembly that convened in Serres he came close to physically liquidating the vassals that were present. But despite this policy, other reigns fell under direct Ottoman rule: Vuk Brankovicć (Skopje 1392), Dukagjin, Tsar Ivan Stracimir, Tsar Ivan Šišman, King Marko, Constantine Dragaš, etc. In 1394, as a reaction to the cruelty on the part of Bayezid, the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II unilaterally broke off vassal relations with the Ottomans. Bayezid responded with Siege of the Constantinople, which lasted until 1402.[20]The Ottoman conquering successes continued with the same intensity. One should note the attempts of Bayezid to spread the Ottoman rule towards Morea, Bosnia and Valachia. Only Dubrovnik was able to manage relations with the Turks without being forced to accept vassaldom. It seemed conditions were ripe for Bayezid to finish what he had started. But in July 1402 the famous Ottoman-Tatar battle took place near Ankara in which the Turks suffered catastrophic defeat, and Bayezid was captured. The defeat caused a crisis in the Ottoman state, and brought a temporary halt to the conquests.

Thus a very important and successful stage of the Ottoman conquests came to an end. If we ask the role of the non-Ottoman factors was in the conquest of the Balkans it is hard to offer a satisfactory response. Still it is necessary to

[20] Matanov/ Mihneva, *Ot Galipoli do Lepanto*, pp. 78–87; John V. A. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor-The University of Michigan Press 1994), pp. 408–411, 421–428; *Istorija srpskog naroda, Druga knjiga (Doba borbi za očuvanje i obnovu države – 1371–1537)*, edited by Jovanka Kalić (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga 1982), pp. 36–63 (Rade Mihaljčič/ Sima Čirkovič); Ivan Đurić, *Sumrak Vizantije. Vreme Jovana VIII Paleologa 1392–1448*, (Belgrade: Prosveta 1984), pp. 85–88.

emphasise three factors: 1. the powerlessness and the military-diplomatic activities of Byzantium in the second quarter of the century produced irreparable negative consequences for Byzantium and for the other Christian territories in the Balkans; 2. the deep divisions and animosity between Byzantium and the other countries in the Balkans; 3. the process of decentralisation, internal deterioration and fragmentation of Byzantium and the rest of the countries in the Balkans. Those factors contributed significantly to the Ottoman territories' increasing 40 times over in the period between 1326 and 1402, mainly after 1371.[21] It seems that after 1371 the role of the non-Ottoman factors was minimal in the further developments of the Ottoman conquests.

[21] Donald E. A. Pitcher, *An Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire: From Earliest Times to the End of the Sixteenth Century*, (Brill Leiden 1968), pp. 40–41

Ferocious Invasion or Smooth Incorporation? Integrating the Established Balkan Military System into the Ottoman Army

Mariya Kiprovska

Being part of the Ottoman Empire for several centuries, the Balkan countries produced a historiography which, in search of a common identity after the dissolution of the Empire, presented a largely negative image of the Turkish/Ottoman conquest of the peninsula. The Ottoman conquest was presented as devastating for the region, the population and the culture of the Balkan nations, as bringing about a rupture to their natural historical development. Probably the most extreme view is to be found in the widespread notion of the "Turkish Yoke" which has prevailed until recently both in the Bulgarian collective imagination and in academia. This notion generally postulated large-scale destruction immediately after the Ottoman conquest, accompanied by the annihilation of a large part of the population and violent mass campaigns for the Islamization of the native populace. It was claimed that as a direct result of the Ottoman conquest the Bulgarian nation suffered a demographic catastrophe and that the new rule brought backwardness to society and complete discontinuity in its development. A similar destructive concept of the Ottoman conquest was likewise reproduced in other Balkan nationalistic historiographies too.[1]

[1] A general overview of the Balkan historiographies with an emphasis on the Islamization is presented by Antonina Zhelyazkova, "Islamization in the Balkans as a Historiographical Problem: the Southeast-European Perspective", in *The Ottomans and the Balkans: a Discussion of Historiography*, ed. Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden–Boston–Köln: Brill, 2002), pp. 223–265. The notion of the "Turkish Yoke" was discussed in a comparative context by Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, who insists that the local chronicles and other literary texts written during the Ottoman rule, which often legitimize the latter, should be considered as well. See his "The 'Turkish Yoke' Revisited: the Ottoman Empire in the Eyes of its Non-Muslim Subjects", published originally in *Zones of Fracture in Modern Europe: the Baltic Countries, the Balkans, and Northern Italy*, ed. Almut Bues (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 2005), pp. 157–164. An elaborated version of this article is published in *Acta Poloniae Historica* 93 (2006): pp. 177–195. The use of local sources was already pointed out by Johann Strauss, "Ottoman Rule Experienced and Remembered: Remarks on Some Greek Chronicles of the Tourkokratia", in *The Ottomans and the Balkans*, ed. Adanır and Faroqhi, pp. 193–221. The

With the emergence of a less biased and more scholarly interest in the history of the Ottoman Empire in general and its institutions in particular (which partly came as a reaction to the oppressive image of the Ottomans, portrayed by the Balkan nationalist historiography), a much less antagonistic image of the Ottoman conquest and subsequent rule over the conquered territories came to dominate historical writing. Presently, modern scholarship accentuates the highly latitudinarian policy of the multireligious and multiethnic Ottoman Empire. Emerging at the frontier between the Byzantine and Seljuk territory in Western Asia Minor in Bithynia, as is now commonly argued, the Ottoman state evolved as a polity which was influenced by both Islamic and Christian traditions. Research of the past three decades has emphasized that the frontier territories in Bithynia, where the Ottoman polity came into being, were less antagonistic in character and should be regarded also as a zone of interaction, collaboration and cultural mixing, characterized by a hybrid culture, a result of the intermingling of the Turkish/Seljukid/Islamic and Byzantine/Christian influences.[2] Emphasizing the peaceful coexistence of different religious groups in the Ottoman realm, as well as the inclusive character of the Ottoman state and institutions, modern historians accentuate the "syncretic", "tolerant" and "latitudinarian" nature of the Ottoman polity with a distinctive "flexible", "pragmatic" and "accommodationist" policy toward the established systems in the conquered lands.[3]

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impact of the Ottoman conquest on the demographic trends in the Bulgarian lands in particular is discussed at length in Grigor Boykov's contribution to the present volume.

[2] Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London: University of California Press, 1995); Heath Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003); Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 28–65; Keith Hopwood, "Low-Level Diplomacy between Byzantines and Ottoman Turks: the Case of Bithynia", in *Byzantine Diplomacy. Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992), pp. 151–155; idem, "The Byzantine-Turkish Frontier c. 1250–1300", in *Acta Viennensia Ottomanica, Akten des 13. CIEPO-Symposiums, Wien, 21.–25. Sept. 1998*, ed. Markus Köhbach, Gisela Procházka-Eisl, and Claudia Römer (Vienna: Institut für Orientalistik, 1999), pp. 153–161; idem, "Christian-Muslim Symbiosis in Anatolia", in *Archaeology, Anthropology and Heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia: the Life and Times of F. W. Hasluck, 1878–1920*, ed. David Shankland (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 13–30; Linda Darling, "The Development of Ottoman Governmental Institutions in the Fourteenth Century: a Reconstruction", in *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community. Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faroqhi*, ed. Vera Costantini and Markus Koller (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 17–34; eadem, "Reformulating the *Gazi* Narrative: When Was the Ottoman State a *Gazi* State?", *Turcica* 43 (2011): pp. 20–27.

[3] Besides the literature cited in the previous footnote, cf. Gábor Ágoston, "A Flexible Empire: Authority and its Limits on the Ottoman Frontiers", in *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities and Political Changes*, ed. Kemal Karpat and Robert Zens (Madison: The University of

Born in the multicultural and multiconfessional environment of the Western Anatolian marches at the turn of the thirteenth century, the Ottoman state's policy from its very outset seems to have been based not on religious antagonism toward the religious other, but was rather centred on a pragmatic rationale, which allowed for the Ottomans to form alliances and cooperate with the local elites, as well as integrate them into the administration and the army, which on the other hand proved to be a winning strategy for their success in the long run. This pragmatic strategy developed fully in the Balkans, where the Ottomans found themselves in a completely new environment, having virtually nothing in common with the indigenous population.[4] It was with the thorough examination of the Ottoman survey registers (*tahrir defterleri*) of the conquered territories in the Balkans that the conciliatory conservative policy of the conquerors toward the pre-conquest local conditions, which clearly originated in their Anatolian motherland, was unveiled sixty years ago by Halil İnalcık in his ground-breaking studies on the Ottoman methods of conquest and the incorporation of the Balkan elites in the governmental, administrative and military system of the evolving Ottoman state.[5] On the basis of the earliest surviving Ottoman registers from the fifteenth century, representing the situation closest to the immediate aftermath of the Turkish conquest, İnalcık showed that the Ottomans adopted many of the administrative and institutional peculiarities of the subdued territories and accommodated large portions of the established military and administrative personnel, integrating many representatives of the former ruling Christian elites, some of whom occupied the highest positions in the Ottoman governmental institutions.

Wisconsin Press, 2003), pp. 15–31. The pragmatic and flexible approach of the Ottomans in dealing with the lands at its southern and northeastern frontiers is examined by Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, "Between Universalistic Claims and Reality: Ottoman Frontiers in the Early Modern Period", in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine M. Woodhead (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 205–219.

[4] Heath W. Lowry, "Early Ottoman Period", in *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey*, ed. Metin Heper and Sabri Sayarı (Abingdon–New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 5–14.

[5] Halil İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", *Studia Islamica* 2 (1954): 103–129; idem, "Od Stefana Dušana do Osmanskog Carstva: Hrišćanske Spahije u Rumeliji u XV vijeku i njihovo porijeklo", *Prilozi za Orijentalnu Filologiju i Istoriju Jugoslovenskih Naroda pod Turskom Vladavinom* 3–4 (1952–1953): pp. 25–54. The first Turkish translation of the last article appeared under the title "Stefan Duşan'dan Osmanlı İmparatorluğuna: XV. Asırda Rumeli'de Hıristiyan Sipahiler ve Menşeleri", in *60. Doğum Yılı Münasebetiyle Fuad Köprülü Armağanı* (Istanbul: Osman Yalçın, 1953), pp. 207–248. It was later reprinted and is most easily accessed in Halil İnalcık, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1954), pp. 137–184. See also his *Hicrî 835 Tarihli Sûret-i Defter-i Arvanid* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1954), a transliterated version of the oldest preserved Ottoman *tahrir defter* (1431) for the Albanian lands.

The Ottomans' flexible and accommodationist approach in dealing with the conquered lands is revealed by the fact that they preserved lots of the pre-existing regional subdivisions and territorial entities and many Ottoman *sancaks*, *kazas* and *nahiyes* simply followed the former division in the subjugated regions. Thus, in the Balkans one may easily recognize the lands controlled by the previous rulers even by the names of the new administrative units: *vilâyet-i* Vlk/Vuk denoted the territories controlled by Vuk Branković, *vilâyet-i* Pavle/Pavle-ili – the lands of the Pavlović family, *vilâyet-i* Kovaç/Kovaç-ili – the Kovačević lands, *vilâyet-i* Laz/Laz-ili – the Lazarević lands, *vilâyet-i* Köstendil/Konstantin-ili – the territories controlled by Konstantin Dragaš, or Karlı-ili in the north-western part of Greece – a district corresponding approximately to the territories of Carlo Tocco I (1381–1430), to name the most obvious examples.[6] Traces of the earlier territorial divisions could be found in the Ottoman *sancaks* in the Bulgarian lands too, where parallels could be drawn with regards to the administrative units of Niğbolu *sancağı*, covering roughly the territories of the former kingdom of Ivan Šišman (1371–1395), the *sancak* of Vidin – with the lands of Ivan Stracimir (1356–1396), and that of Silistra – encompassing the territories of the independent Dobrudja estate of despot Ivanko (1385–1388 and 1395–1399?).[7] The situation is similar in Albania, where the former local noble family holdings are distinguishable in the naming of the new Ottoman districts where the *vilâyet* of Pavlo Kurtik, the Balşa-ili, the Yuvan-ili, and the *nahiyes* of Aştin, Bogdan Ripe, Dimitri Gönima and Kondo Miho certainly bare traces of the pre-Ottoman landlords of these territories.[8]

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[6] Hazim Šabanović, "Upravna podjela jugoslavenskih zemlja pod turskom vladavinom do Karlovačkog mira 1699 godine", *Godišnjak Istorijskog društva Bosne i Hercegovine* 4 (1952): pp. 171–204; idem, *Krajište Isa-Bega Ishakovića. Zbirni Katastarski Popis iz 1455. Godine* (Sarajevo: Orijentalni Institut u Sarajevu, 1964); idem, *Bosanski Pašaluk: postanak i upravna podjela* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1982); Hamid Hadžibegić, Adem Handžić and Ešref Kovačević, *Oblast Brankovića. Opširni Katarstarski Popis iz 1455. Godine* (Sarajevo: Orijentalni Institut u Sarajevu, 1972); Hristo Matanov, *Knjažestvoto na Dragaši. Kăm istorijata na Iztočna i Severoiztočna Makedonija v doosmanskata epoha* (Sofija: Gal-iko, 1997) and his *Văznikvane i oblik na Kjustendilski sandžak prez XV–XVI v.* (Sofija: IF-94, 2000); Victor L. Ménage, "Karlı-İli", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, vol. 4 (1978), pp. 656–657; Franz Babinger, "Beiträge zur Geschichte von Qarly-Eli vornehmlich aus osmanischen Quellen", in idem, *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte Südosteuropas und der Levante*, vol. 1 (München: Südosteuropa-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1962), pp. 370–377; Machiel Kiel, "Karlı-ili", in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 24 (2001), pp. 499–502.

[7] Dušanka Bojanić-Lukač, *Vidin i vidinskijat sandžak prez XV-XVI vek. Dokumenti ot arhivite na Carigrad i Ankara* (Sofija: Nauka i izkustvo, 1975); Rumen Kovačev, *Opis na nikopolskija sandžak ot 80-te godini na XV vek* (Sofija: Narodna biblioteka "Sv. sv. Kiril i Metodij", 1997).

[8] İnalcık, *Fatih Devri*, pp. 148, 158–160; idem, "Les régions de Kruje et de la Dibra autour de 1467 et 1519 d'après les documents ottomans", in Halil İnalcık, *From Empire to Republic: Essays on Ottoman and Turkish Social History* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1995), pp. 73–89.

Likewise, *vilâyet-i* Kral and *vilâyet-i* Hersek denoted the territories formerly controlled by the Bosnian king Stjepan Tomašević and duke (Herceg) Stjepan Vukčić Kosača respectively,[9] whereas the *nahiye*s of Pirlepe and Kırçova (Prilep-Kičevo) encompassed the small principality of Prilep in western Macedonia, governed by Marko Mrnjavčević (known as Prince Marko / Kraljević Marko), the son of king Vukašin Mrnjavčević, who was killed in 1371 at the battle of Maritsa.[10] Moreover, it appears that the Ottomans retained the boundaries of even the smaller administrative units, as many of the *nahiye*s in northern Bosnia strictly followed the territorial division of the old *župas* too.[11] In Greek Thessaly the names of the *nahiye*s of Mikra-ili and Kravar/Kravaldi undoubtedly comprised the old family estates of the Christian landlords from the pre-conquest period.[12]

Besides unveiling the rather conservative method by which the Ottomans incorporated Balkan territories through absorption of established administrative practices, the earliest Ottoman survey registers from the Balkans attest that a number of members of the old Balkan aristocratic elite and high-ranking military officers were also integrated into the new system. During the fifteenth century there were still traces of those cooperative groups from the old nobility and high military class who had chosen to side with the Ottomans and were incorporated into the new military system, preserving parts of the privileged position they previously held, as well as their landed estates (or at least substantial parts of them). The presence of big Christian *timar*-holders (*sipahi*), whose large prebends retained their heritable status and thus remained in family possession while passed down from father to son, is a pure indication both of the Ottoman conciliatory behaviour in adopting the local conditions and of the more or less smooth transition some members of the Balkan military caste experienced while recognizing the Ottoman overlordship. In Thessaly the Mikra and Kravar/Kravaldi families held their large fief-holdings hereditarily in the districts of the same names for several generations, thus illustrating that the families retained their rights over their

[9] Hatice Oruç, "15. Yüzyılda Bosna Sancağı ve İdari Dağılımı", *Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi (OTAM)* 18 (2005): pp. 249–271; eadem, "Christian Sipahis in the Bosnian Sandjak (15th Century)", *Archivum Ottomanicum* 26 (2009): pp. 5–16.

[10] Feridun Emecen, "Pirlepe'nin İlk Osmanlı Tahrirleri", *Güney Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi* 12 (1998): pp. 63–70; idem, "Defter-i Köhne: Pirlepe-Kırçova Kesiminin En Eski Timar Defteri (1445–1455)", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 43 (2014): pp. 341–474.

[11] Jelena Mrgić, *Severna Bosna, 13–16. vek* (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 2008), pp. 227–271.

[12] İnalcık, *Fatih Devri*, pp. 145–148; Melek Delilbaşı, "Christian *Sipahi*s in the Tırhala Taxation Registers (Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries)", in *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete V. A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 10–12 January 2003*, ed. Antonis Anastasopoulos (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2005), pp. 87–114.

patrimonial estates from the pre-conquest period. In the Ottoman times, the estates were held jointly by the sons and grandsons of the original landlords, as some of them embraced Islam and others kept their Christian names. Over time, however, as was the case with many other Christian *sipahi*s in the Balkans, the descendants of these pre-conquest landlords became Muslim, leaving no traces of their Christian background.[13] Again in Thessaly, the *subaşı* of Fenar (Hasan Beg bin Zenebiş) was a direct descendant of the Zenebish family, who were local lords in South Albania. As a governor of the Tetovo/Kalkandelen region, Hasan Beg of the Zenebish family was allocated fiefs in the area. The same was true for the descendants of the Dukagjin family as well, who were integrated into the Ottoman Empire and Islamized under the name Dukagin-zade, as well as for some members of the Kastrioti family, including the father of George Kastrioti and George himself prior to his rebellion.[14] Another Albanian elite family, namely the Ashtin (Aştin oğlu Yakub Beg and his brother Mustafa), also held big *timar*s.[15] In Albania traces are also found of the Albanian Muzaki family, as a large prebend was held by the *sancakbegi* of Arvanid, Todor Muzak oğlu Yakub Beg.[16] The lands of the Ottoman district Pavlo Kurtik were a heritable fief-holding of the son of the local landlord, Isa Beg, and later of his descendants.[17] The offspring of Carlo Tocco, designated in the Ottoman realm with the family name Karlızadeler or Karlıoğulları,[18] or even the descendants of the Palaiologos Byzantine royal family were also among the large prebend-holders in the fifteenth-century Ottoman Balkans,[19]

[13] Ibidem.

[14] Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Skanderbeg. Der neue Alexander auf dem Balkan* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 2009), pp. 135–143, pp. 161–168; idem, "Skanderbeg et les sultans: anatomie d'une rébellion contre l'Empire ottoman", *Turcica* 43 (2011): pp. 55–90, esp. 73, 77; İnalcık, "Les régions de Kruje et de la Dibra", pp. 73–89; Lowry, *The Nature*, p. 127.

[15] İnalcık, *Fatih Devri*, p. 148.

[16] Ibidem, p. 159.

[17] Ibidem, p. 160.

[18] Ibidem, p. 161; Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, "Les Tocco: seigneurs, vassaux, otages, renégats", *Güneydoğu Avrupa Çalışmaları Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi* (*GAMER*) 1 (2012): pp. 11–22; Grigor Boykov, "Karlızâde 'Ali Bey: An Ottoman Dignitary's Pious Endowment and the Emergence of the Town of Karlova in Central Bulgaria", in *Defterology: Festschrift in Honor of Heath Lowry*, ed. Selim Kuru and Baki Tezcan = *Journal of Turkish Studies* 40 (2013): 247–267. Regrettably, the latter article has been published without the otherwise extremely rich bibliography in the footnotes. It is expected that the thus mutilated version will soon be republished in its original form with its full references by the same journal in one of its forthcoming issues!

[19] Heath W. Lowry, "A Note on Three Palaiologai Princes as Members of the Ottoman Ruling Elite", in *The Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, the Greek Lands: Toward a Social and Economic History. Studies in Honor of John C. Alexander*, ed. Elias Kolovos, Phokion Kotzageorgis, Sophia Laiou and Marinos Sariyannis (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2007), pp. 279–288.

retaining parts of their patrimony under the new order and representing perfectly, along with many other examples, the preservation of the 'Byzantine legacy in Ottoman forms'.[20]

Furthermore, members of the highest strata of the pre-conquest nobility not only retained their prebends and positions in the new military system, but even climbed to the highest levels of the social ladder and were fully integrated into the Ottoman ruling elite. Thus, descendants of the Balkan aristocratic families, who were originally either taken captive or were sons of the Christian vassals of the Sultan sent to the Palace as hostages, rose to the highest administrative posts of the Ottoman state apparatus, even occupying the position of Grand Vizier. The fact that many Ottoman Grand Viziers came from the ranks of the Balkan aristocracy is no doubt illustrative of the Ottomans' accommodationist approach in subsuming members of the former elite into their own administrative system.[21] It also suggests that the Ottoman conquest in the Balkans brought about transformation and continuity rather than large-scale destruction and annihilation of the established aristocratic elite and administrative practices. The incorporation of the previous elites into the Ottoman governmental institutions proved instrumental for the efficient assimilation of the Christian Balkans into Ottoman governance, and eased the process by which the new rulers' will could be conveyed.

The whole-scale level on which the Ottomans used the service of Christians in the Balkans as a means of integration cannot be fully apprehended by only examining the incorporation of the members of the pre-conquest nobility into

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[20] To paraphrase the title of an article by Speros Vryonis, "The Byzantine Legacy and Ottoman Forms", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23–24 (1969–1970): pp. 251–308.

[21] Lowry, *The Nature*, pp. 115–130; idem, "A Note on Three Palaiologai Princes", pp. 279–288; idem, *Hersekzāde Ahmed Paşa: An Ottoman Statesman's Career & Pious Endowments / Hersekzāde Ahmed Paşa: Bir Osmanlı Devlet Adamının Meslek Hayatı ve Kurduğu Vakıflar* (Istanbul: Bahçeşehir University Press, 2011); Theocharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453–1474)* (Leiden–Boston–Köln: Brill, 2001); Hedda Reindl, *Männer um Bāyezīd. Eine prosopographische Studie über die Epoche Sultan Bāyezīds II. (1481–1512)* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1983); Klaus-Peter Matschke, "Research Problems Concerning the Transition to Tourkokratia: the Byzantinist Standpoint", in *The Ottomans and the Balkans*, ed. Adanır and Faroqhi, pp. 79–113; Mihailo St. Popović, "Kaiser, Zar und Sultan – Das Byzantinische Reich und die Integration Südosteuropas in das Osmanische Reich", *Historicum: Zeitschrift für Geschichte* (Sommer – Herbst 2011): 72–78; Behija Zlatar, *Gazi Husrev-beg* (Sarajevo: Orijentalni Institut u Sarajevu, 2010); eadem, "Mehmed Bey Obrenović, Sanjakbey of Herzegovina", *Ankara Üniversitesi Güneydoğu Avrupa Çalışmaları Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi (GAMER)* 1 (2012): pp. 187–196; Zachariadou, "Les Tocco", 11–22; Dino Mujadžević, "Osmanska osvajanja u Slavoniji 1552. u svjetlu osmanskih arhivskih izvora", *Povijesni prilozi* 28 (2009): pp. 89–107.

the Ottoman military and administrative system.[22] Indeed, the larger number of Christian *timar*-holders in the first centuries of Ottoman rule in the Balkans obviously pertained to the middle and lower-ranking military, as indicated by the size of their military prebends. A growing number of studies on the fifteenth-century Ottoman tax records from the Balkans, sparked by the doyen of Ottoman studies Halil İnalcık, who first explored a series of them to unveil the flexibility and inclusiveness of the Ottoman system in regards to the incorporation of the Balkan administrative and military elite, show that to a large extent the Ottomans maintained the previous status of the Christian soldiers.[23] The fact that the Christian *sipahi*s could largely preserve their former social position and retain their prebends (with the right of inheritance)[24] under the

[22] The Ottoman military organization in the Serbian lands and its incorporation of many local Christian elements has been the focus of many Jugoslav scholars. Cf. Olga Zirojević, *Tursko vojno uređenje u Srbiji (1459–1683)* (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 1974). An excellent overview of the early Ottoman military organization and warfare strategies, presented as an amalgamation of Turkoman nomadic, Seljuk-Ilkhanid and Byzantine elements, is offered by Pál Fodor, "Ottoman Warfare, 1300–1453", in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 1: *Byzantium to Turkey, 1071–1453*, ed. Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 192–226. Other examples of absorption of Christian elements by the Ottoman state in the latter's Grand Strategy in dealing with the religious other which revolved more around pragmatic reasoning and calculated priorities are given by Emrah Safa Gürkan, "Christian Allies of the Ottoman Empire", in *European History Online (EGO)*, published by the Institute of European History (IEG), Mainz 2010–12–03. URL: http://www.ieg-ego.eu/gurkane-2010-en URN: urn:nbn:de:0159-20100921549 [2014–10–15].

[23] İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", 113–117; idem, *Fatih Devri*, pp. 137–184, esp. 145–151; idem, "Timariotes chrétiens en Albanie au XVe siècle d'après un register de timar ottoman", *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 4 (1951): pp. 118–138; Branislav Đurđev, "Hrišćani spahije u severnoj Srbiji u XV veku", *Godišnjak Društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine* 4 (1952): pp. 166–169; Bistra Cvetkova, "Novye dannye o hristianah-spahijah na Balkanskom poluostrove v period tureckogo gospodstva", *Vizantijskij vremennik* 13 (1958): pp. 184–197; Nicoara Beldiceanu, "Timariotes chrétiens en Thessalie (1454/55)", *Südost-Forschungen* 44 (1985): pp. 45–81; Delilbaşı, "Christian *Sipahi*s in the Tırhala Taxation Registers", pp. 87–114; Heath Lowry, "The Island of Limnos. A Case Study on the Continuity of Byzantine Forms under Ottoman Rule", in *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society: Papers Given at a Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks in May 1982*, ed. Anthony Bryer and Heath Lowry (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1986), pp. 235–259; idem, *Fifteenth Century Ottoman Realities: Christian Peasant Life on the Aegean Island of Limnos* (Istanbul: Eren, 2002); idem, "Privilege and Property in Ottoman Maçuka in the Opening Decades of the Turkokratia: 1461–1553", in *Continuity and Change*, ed. Bryer and Lowry, pp. 97–128; Oruç, "Christian Sipahis in the Bosnian Sandjak", 5–16.

[24] Ottoman records also demonstrate that initially the Christian *sipahi*s inherited their fiefs from father to son, which supports the assumption that the old tradition of the *baština* and *pronoia* holdings was adopted by the Ottoman system at least for some time. A circumstantial examination of the Byzantine *pronoia* and its comparison with the Ottoman *timar* has

new system, on the other hand, undoubtedly explains the relatively rapid and smooth expansion of Ottoman rule in the Balkans.[25] It is indicative that shortly after the fall of the last Serbian capital Smederevo (1459), which effectively put an end to the medieval Serbian state, and its incorporation into the Ottoman administrative system, the military class of the bordering *sancak* of Semendire remained largely intact. The majority of the fief-holders were Christian, while the bulk of the entire military organization, including the members of auxiliary contingents that were not entitled to military prebends, were overwhelmingly non-Muslim too.[26] As revealed by the earliest fifteenth-century *tahrir defters* from other parts of the Balkans, in some areas close to half of the Ottoman *timariots* were Christian, whereas in other areas their number averaged around 20 percent.[27] At that stage many of the formerly Christian fief-holders had already become Muslim converts, bearing only their fathers' Christian names, which suggests that at the beginning of the Ottoman conquest their number must have been even greater.[28] Moreover, as convincingly shown by the attentive studies of Heath Lowry on various regions in the Balkans and the former empire of Trapezund, which proved crucial in unveiling the transition from pre-Ottoman to Ottoman rule, the autochthonous population which melted into the Ottoman military was not only active in conquering foreign lands under the Ottoman banner, but was essential for the protection of their fatherland, a fact that perfectly illustrates the accomodationist approach of the conquerors

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been recently presented by Mark Bartusis, *Land and Privilege in Byzantium: The Institution of Pronoia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[25] İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", 115.

[26] Đurđev, "Hrišćani spahije u severnoj Srbiji", pp. 165–169; Zirojević, *Tursko vojno uređenje u Srbiji*, pp. 158–208; Ema Miljković-Bojanić, *Smederevski sandžak (1476–1560). Zemlja. Naselja. Stanovništvo* (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 2004); Ema Miljković, Aleksandar Krstić, *Braničevo u XV veku. Istorijsko-geografska studija* (Požarevac: Narodni muzej, 2007); idem, "Na raskršću dve epohe: kontinuitet i promene društvene structure u Braničevo u 15. veku", *Istorijski časopis* 56 (2008): pp. 279–304.

[27] İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", 113–114; idem, *Fatih Devri*, pp. 145–151. For other estimates of the percentage of Christian *timar*-holders in other Balkan provinces of the empire cf. Delilbaşı, "Christian *Sipahis* in the Tırhala Taxation Registers", pp. 89–91; Linda Darling, "Nasihatnameler, İcmal Defterleri, and the Timar-Holding Ottoman Elite in the Late Sixteenth Century", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 43 (2014): pp. 193–226, esp. 203 and table 1.

[28] The generally accepted view that with the passing of time it became compulsory to be a Muslim in order to obtain a fief-holding was recently refuted by Linda Darling. Her thorough study on a series of sixteenth-century summary tax registers convincingly shows that the practice of allocating *timar*-holding to Christians did not come to an abrupt end in the sixteenth century. On the contrary, the data shows that after 1520 in some provinces up to 12–16% of *timar*-holders were Christian, whereas Muslim sons of Christian fathers received *timars* in significant numbers throughout the sixteenth century. Darling, "Nasihatnameler, İcmal Defterleri, and the Timar-Holding Ottoman Elite", 203, 219.

toward the established customs and practices.[29] Furthermore, the example of the Limnos island, where the Ottomans largely preserved the Byzantine practices in all areas of life, such as administration, military organisation, religious life, agriculture and taxation, and where the conquerors' role consisted of little more than collecting taxes, could be symptomatic of the large-scale continuity, rather than destruction, of the traditional pre-conquest practices which found their way into the Ottoman system.[30] The preliminary results of an on-going project undertaken by Lowry, based on a thorough examination of the whole corpus of extant fifteenth-century Ottoman *tahrir defters* from the Balkans, shows that in the immediate aftermath of the conquest roughly one-third of all fief-holders were Christians.[31] Additionally, taking into account the fact that huge numbers of former Christians, now part of the Janissary corps, manned the fortresses at the borders of the Ottoman Empire, one is confronted with the scale on which the Ottomans utilised local manpower to establish their firm control over the Balkan territories. This process of successful incorporation of the Balkan lesser nobility was undoubtedly a twofold one and both the Ottomans' pragmatic approach and needs-driven policy, as well as the prospect they offered local noblemen of preserving their property and social position, should be taken into consideration.

Additionally, what also seems to have smoothened the path of the Ottoman conquest in the Balkans was the integration into the conquerors' system of local contingents and groups with paramilitary functions, often also incorporated along with their established structural organization, thus easing the process of transition from the pre-Ottoman to Ottoman sovereignty. A sizable portion of the lesser nobility of the Balkans, namely the Christian *voynuks* (*vojnik*, i.e. soldier), were integrated in such a way into the Ottoman military structure. As indicated by the earliest Ottoman survey registers from Rumeli (i.e. the Balkans), they were direct descendants of the old lower ranking military (*kadîmî sipahi*), who under the new system retained their military fiefs (*baştina*), obligations, as well as certain privileges (they enjoyed tax exemption-status). A *voynuk* and two to three assistants (*yamak*), sometimes from the family of the

[29] Lowry, "The Island of Limnos", pp. 235–259; idem, *Fifteenth Century Ottoman Realities*; idem, "Privilege and Property in Ottoman Maçuka", pp. 97–128; idem, *The Islamization & Turkification of the City of Trabzon (Trebizond), 1461–1583* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2010).

[30] Lowry, "The Island of Limnos", pp. 235–259; idem, *Fifteenth Century Ottoman Realities*.

[31] This information was privately communicated on numerous occasions, for which I express my gratitude to Prof. Lowry. Cf. Heath W. Lowry, *The Shaping of the Ottoman Balkans, 1350–1550. The Conquest, Settlement & Infrastructural Development of Northern Greece* (Istanbul: Bahçeşehir University Press, 2008), pp. 3–8; Selim Kuru and Baki Tezcan, "A Life in Ottoman Studies: An Interview with Prof. Heath Lowry", in *Defterology: Festschrift in Honor of Heath Lowry*, ed. Selim Kuru and Baki Tezcan = *Journal of Turkish Studies* 40 (2013): pp. 30–31.

soldier, possessed their *baştinas*, which were exempted from certain taxes, on a hereditary basis. They were organized into groups of varying numbers under the direct command of a *voynuk* officer, called a *lagator*. During the fifteenth century they were in active military service and were expected to join the military campaigns in full armour. The *voynuk* organization was widespread and quite sizable in the Balkans, but was mainly concentrated along the strategic routes and the bordering regions, which on the one hand is a clear reference to its territorial spread prior the conquest and on the other – to the militarized parts of the peninsula, where the high density of landed soldiers unveils the contested zones of conflict before the arrival of the Ottomans.[32] The situation was similar with another militarized Balkan group, namely the Vlachs, or *Eflâk*. These cattle-breeders and shepherds were undoubtedly autochthonous Balkan groups who entered into the Ottoman system with their established military and civic organization. Similarly to the organization of the *voynuk*s, every five Vlach houses had to provide for one soldier in times of a military campaign. They had their own commanders – *knez*, *lagator*, *primikür*, and *çeribaşı*, and were under the command of the *sancakbegi* during campaigns. Additionally, the Vlachs supplied manpower for the *voynuk* and *martolos* auxiliary troops too. In return for their services they were exempted from certain taxes while their lands were liable only to a lump sum tax assessment (*adet-i eflâkiye*). Geographically, the presence of the Vlachs was also most numerous along the border zones, mostly in the bordering Ottoman *sancak*s of Hersek, Semendire, Braniçevo, and Vidin.[33] Another most probably pre-Ottoman military institution was that of the Christian *martolos*es (from the Greek *armatolos*, 'armed men'). Likewise,

[32] İnalcık, *Fatih Devri*, pp. 156–177; idem, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", 114–115; Zirojević, *Tursko vojno uređenje u Srbiji*; Yavuz Ercan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Bulgarlar ve Voynuklar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989).

[33] Nicoară Beldiceanu, "La région de Timok-Morava dans les documents de Mehmed II et de Selim I", *Revue des Études Roumaines* 3–4 (1955/1956): pp. 111–129; Nicoară Beldiceanu and Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "Quatre actes de Mehmed II concernant les Valaques des Balkans slaves", *Südost-Forschungen* 24 (1965): pp. 103–118; Nicoară Beldiceanu, "Sur les Valaques des Balkans Slaves à l'époque ottomane (1450–1550)", *Revue des Études Islamiques* 34 (1966): pp. 83–123; idem, "Les Valaques de Bosnie à la fin du XV[e] siècle et leurs institutions", *Turcica* 7 (1975): pp. 122–134; Dušanka Bojanić, "Jedan rani kanun za vlahe Smederevskog sandžaka", *Vesnik Vojnog Muzeja* 11–12 (1966): pp. 146–160; Dušanka Bojanić-Lukać, "Vlasi u severnoj Srbiji i njihovi prvi kanuni", *Istorijski časopis* 18 (1971): pp. 255–268; eadem, "Ce que signifient les données sur les Valaques de Sjenica dans le registre de l'année 1455", *Révue Historique* 34 (1987): pp. 97–112; Zirojević, *Tursko vojno uređenje u Srbiji*. A diligent study of the changing identity and status of the Vlachs within the Ottoman system is presented by Vjeran Kursar, "Being an Ottoman Vlach: On Vlach Identity(ies), Role and Status in Western Parts of the Ottoman Balkans (15[th] – 18[th] Centuries)", *Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi (OTAM)* 34 (2013): pp. 115–161.

the Ottomans employed their services mostly at the borders of the empire, as these soldiers appear typically as fortress guards and serving in the river fleets. The *martoloses* in the Balkans were mainly used as armed police and border patrols, safeguarding important mines or strategic mountain passes. They were both mounted and on foot and, being stationed in the frontier regions, occasionally participated in raids across the border, but usually acted in their own regions as peacetime border patrols. At first many of them received regular pay, but some were also awarded *timar*-holdings in the border regions, and, as was the case with other auxiliaries, they were exempted from certain taxes in return for their services.[34]

It is notable that former Balkan militarized groups were used extensively by the Ottomans in strategic places, such as the border regions; Christians were employed in manning the fortresses, guarding mountain passes, safeguarding mines, many Christians were miners themselves, or were occupied in salt-production, etc.[35] Christians served in the navy too; they were employed by the Ottomans not only as ordinary sailors and corsairs, but one also finds them rising to the highest posts in the Ottoman fleet.[36]

As it becomes apparent, the Ottomans employed Christians extensively at all levels of their military organisation – from the lesser ranks of the regular soldiery and auxiliary regiments to the highest commanding posts in the army. This military "cooperation" between the Ottomans and different Christian groups and individuals undoubtedly smoothened the process of incorporation of the Balkan territories into the Ottoman domain and ought to be account-

[34] Milan Vasić, "Die Martolosen im Osmanischen Reich", *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 2 (1964): pp. 172–189 or the Turkish translation, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Martoloslar", *Tarih Dergisi* 31 (1977): pp. 47–64; idem, *Martolosi u jugoslavenskim zemljama pod turskom vladavinom* (Sarajevo: Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, 1967); İnalcık, *Fatih Devri*, pp. 179–180; Mark Stein, *Guarding the Frontier: Ottoman Border Forts and Garrisons in Europe* (London–New York: Tauris, 2007), pp. 89–92.

[35] Evgenii Radoušev, "Ottoman Border Periphery (*Serhad*) in the Nikopol Vilayet, first Half of the 16th Century", *Études balkaniques* 3–4 (1995): pp. 140–60; Stein, *Guarding the Frontier*, pp. 89–92; Zirojević, *Tursko vojno uređenje u Srbiji*, pp. 158–208; Aleksandar Stojanovski, *Dervendžistvoto vo Makedonija* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1974); idem, *Raja so specijalni zadolženija vo Makedonija (vojnuci, sokolari, orizari i sokolari)* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1990); Elena Grozdanova, Stefan Andreev, *Solarstvoto po bălgarskoto Černomorie prez XV–XIX v.* (Sofija: Narodna biblioteka "Sv. sv. Kiril i Metodij", 1982); idem, *Iz istorijata na rudarstvoto i metalurgijata v bălgarskite zemi prez XV–XIX v.* (Sofija: Narodna biblioteka "Sv. sv. Kiril i Metodij", 1993).

[36] Emrah Safa Gürkan, "The Centre and the Frontier: Ottoman Cooperation with the North African Corsairs in the Sixteenth Century", *Turkish Historical Review* 1 (2010): pp. 125–163; idem, "Christian Allies of the Ottoman Empire", pp. 8–10; idem, "My Money or Your Life: Habsburg Hunt for Uluc Ali", *Studia Historica. Historia Moderna* 36 (2014): pp. 111–135.

ed for when examining the methods of Ottoman conquest and subsequent rule. As İnalcık convincingly illustrated sixty years ago in his seminal article, the Ottomans pursued a policy of gradual incorporation in the course of their conquest, in which two distinct phases were markedly distinguishable from the very beginning of Ottoman history – the first stage was that of an alliance, followed by one of vassalage and direct control.[37] Arguably, these stages were noticeable in all levels of Ottoman accommodationist practices toward the established pre-conquest conditions and were an indispensable part of the evolving process of Ottoman state building and increasingly centralized Ottoman policy. At the beginning of the Ottoman domination in the Balkans the conquerors incorporated many members of the cooperative pre-existing Christian aristocratic elite and lesser nobility with only minor alterations to their previous positions. With the passage of time and the evolution of a more centralized system, however, members of the former elites either melted into the new system without leaving a trace of their previous eminence or were deprived of their privileged status and replaced by the products of the new order. Thus, for example, the Christian *voynuk* auxiliaries, along with other auxiliaries too, lost their privileges and, after being deprived from active military service, were reduced to the status of ordinary *re'aya*.[38] Similarly, members of the old Balkan aristocratic elite who occupied the highest administrative posts in the emerging empire gave way to the centrally-trained "slaves of the Port" of *devşirme* origin who came to monopolize the high-ranking state offices.[39] Thus, with the changing historical dynamics we see the evolution of Ottoman "pragmatism" with its altered meaning. While at the beginning of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans the conquerors pursued a rather accommodationist approach toward the established practices and local elites, explained mainly by the manpower shortage, over time they slowly incorporated and subsumed into the newly evolving centralized system the pre-existing Christian elements and gradually replaced them with the *devşirme* recruits and more centralized military organization.

The ease with which the Muslim state of the Ottomans adopted many Christian practices and allowed for the advancement of members of the pre-conquest Christian nobility to the highest ranks in its administration induced some scholars to label it "syncretic", and others to conclude that up until the fifteenth century Ottoman frontier society lived in a state of "metadoxy", where religious syncretism and militancy coexisted peacefully.[40] More

[37] İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", 103–107.

[38] Ercan, *Bulgarlar ve Voynuklar*.

[39] Lowry, *The Nature*, pp. 128–30; Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of the Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550–1650* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

[40] Lowry, *The Nature*; Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*.

recently, the validity of terms such as "syncretic" and "tolerant" describing the early Ottoman policy toward the pre-conquest local conditions and individuals has been seriously challenged, especially when we are reminded that the Muslim narratives from the same period illustrate that toleration was not an omnipresent feature of religious coexistence and that in fact the co-habitation of different religious groups abounded with anti-syncretic tensions too.[41] Yet, as much as these tensions should be taken into account and as much as we should probably move away from the term "syncretism", which clearly obscures the differences among the religious groups in the Empire and muddles the complicated matrix of power relations during the Ottoman state building process, it seems that it was not religious antagonism which prevailed in the Balkans in the wake of the Ottoman conquest. Rather, cooperation and alliance with the locals seem to have dominated the Ottomans' initial policy, while for their Christian allies it appears that the allegiance to the new rulers was a matter of carefully calculated priorities. It suffices to take a closer look only at the development of the uprising of George Kastrioti (Skanderbeg) to catch a glimpse of the complicated relations among the Christian nobles, even members of Skanderbeg's family themselves, some of whom pledged allegiance to him only in pursuit of their petty feuds, while others sided with the Ottomans, seeking the preservation of their own possessions. Although, generally speaking, the uprising may be called Christian, since no Muslims supported it, it certainly was not in itself an uprising of the Christians. Rather, its development showcases the heterogeneous character of the local nobility and populace, each of whom defended their own particular interests while entering alliances and negotiating favourable positions for their own sake. As convincingly demonstrated by Oliver Jens Schmitt, the anatomy of the rebellion of Skanderbeg could be illustrative for the Ottoman conquest throughout the Balkans as a whole: it was the regional conflict of competing nobles, so-

[41] The concept of "syncretism", commonly emphasized in reference to the early Ottoman state building, was recently challenged by Tijana Krstić. On the basis of contemporary conversion narratives, she argues that religious coexistence in the fifteenth-century Ottoman state was not free of tensions between the different religious groups. Moreover, the politics of religious synthesis and toleration was closely linked to the evolution of the Ottoman imperial ideology and to the constant reconfiguration of the elites and their relation to the center of imperial power. Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011), pp. 16–19, 51–74; eadem, "Conversion and Converts to Islam in Ottoman Historiography of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries", in *Writing History at the Ottoman Court: Editing the Past, Fashioning the Future*, ed. by H. Erdem Çıpa and Emine Fetvacı (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013), pp. 58–79. Cf. the contribution of Krstić in the present volume.

cial groups, conflicting interests and personal rivalries that indeed facilitated the Ottoman conquest and should be all taken into serious consideration.[42] Clearly, some constituents of the pre-conquest social order sought to preserve the dismemberment of the Balkan territories, which enabled them to preserve their own dominions and resources, while others sought the security of a more centralized political system, which besides offering safety also opened up opportunities for career advancement.

The same must hold true not only for the Albanian Christians, but also for other members of the Balkan population cooperative with the Ottomans, be they of noble or ordinary descent. What is noteworthy, however, is that their subsequent integration into the Ottoman system obfuscates our observations as to the evolution or decline of their position in the increasingly centralised Ottoman polity. Such an opportunity presents itself when one traces the careers of the families of Balkan marchlords, who joined the Ottomans at the beginning of their expansion, retained hereditary rights to their posts and thus created dynasties of military commanders. The eponymous founders of two of these state-founding families, namely the Mihaloğlus and the Evrenosoğlus, are commonly used to exemplify the conciliatory policy of the Ottomans toward the pre-conquest nobility.[43] The practice of subsuming members of the former ruling elites and conditions into the Ottoman state, it was argued, was a continuation of a process that already began in Bithynia (the fatherland of the Ottoman state) at the beginning of the fourteenth century.[44] The most commonly used example of this Ottoman-Christian symbiosis is the figure of the Byzantine renegade Köse Mihal, who joined Osman from the outset of the Ottoman state-building in Anatolia.[45] Later, the descendants of this state-founding family enjoyed the careers of military commanders under whose command

[42] Schmitt, *Skanderbeg*; idem, "Anatomie d'une rébellion", 55–90.

[43] Lowry, *The Nature*, pp. 55–94.

[44] Ibidem, p. 130; İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", 103; idem, "Osmanlı Beyliği'nin Kurucusu Osman Beg", *Belleten* 71 (2007): pp. 479–537.

[45] Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, pp. 127, 144–145; Lowry, *The Nature*, pp. 57, 66, 89–90; Hopwood, "Low-Level Diplomacy between Byzantines and Ottoman Turks", pp. 153–154; idem, "Christian-Muslim Symbiosis in Anatolia", pp. 13–30; idem, "Peoples, Territories and States: The Formation of the Beğliks of Pre-Ottoman Turkey", in *Decision Making and Change in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. C. E. Farah (Kirksville: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1993), 134–135; idem, "Mudara", in *Aspects of Ottoman History: Papers from CIEPO IX, Jerusalem*, ed. Amy Singer and Amnon Cohen (=Scripta Hierosolymitana 35) (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1994), pp. 157–158; idem, "Osman, Bithynia and the Sources", *Archív Orientální, Supplementa VIII* (1998), 159–160; idem, "Tales of Osman: Legend or History?", in *XIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi, Ankara 1999*, vol. 3, part 3 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2002), pp. 2049–2060; idem, "Living on the Margin – Byzantine Farmers and Turkish Herders", *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 10:1–2 (2000): 101–102.

many of the initial Ottoman conquests in the Balkans were accomplished. Like the other prominent families of frontier lords (*uc begleri*) from the Evrenosoğlu, Turahanoğlu, İshakoğlu and Malkoçoğlu families, they are usually referred to in the scholarly literature as enjoying special status in the Ottoman frontier regions, holding hereditarily the governorship in these regions and retaining relative autonomy vis-à-vis the central Ottoman administration.[46] They had their own large retinues and possessed a great many slaves, as well as huge hereditary estates in the regions under their governance, emerging practically as territorial magnates too.[47] Their authority in the border districts was attested by their right to allocate *timar*-estates to their own retinues as late as the fifteenth century (when the first Ottoman survey registers were compiled).[48] Most importantly, their power in the Ottoman polity was most purely attested by their interference in the Ottoman dynasty's internal political struggles for supremacy[49] – they were a major factor during the Ottoman civil war between the sons of Bayezid I that followed the dissolution of the empire after the battle of Ankara (1402),[50] during the first years of the rule of Murad II (1421–1451), when his supremacy was contested by yet another pretender to the Ottoman throne, Düzme Mustafa,[51] or even at the beginning of the sixteenth century,

[46] Halil İnalcık, "The Emergence of the Ottomans", in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 1 A: *The Central Islamic Lands from Pre-Islamic Times to the First World War*, ed. P. M. Holt, Ann Lambton and Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 283–286; Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "En marge d'un acte concernant le pengyek et les aqinği", *Revue des études islamiques* 37 (1969): pp. 21–47; Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1650. The Structure of Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 186–188; Fodor, "Ottoman Warfare, 1300–1453," pp. 204–205.

[47] Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "XV. ve XVI. Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Toprak İşçilerinin Organizasyonu Şekilleri. III: Rumeli'ndeki Kulluklar ve Ortakçı Kullar", *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 1:4 (1940): pp. 397–447; idem, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Bir İskân ve Kolonizasyon Metodu Olarak Vakıflar ve Temlikler", *Vakıflar Dergisi* 2 (1942): pp. 359–360; idem, "Türk-İslâm Toprak Hukuku Tatbikatının Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Aldığı Şekiller. III: İmparatorluk Devrinde Toprak Mülk ve Vakıflarının Hususiyeti", in idem, *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi – Toplu Eserler 1* (Istanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1980), pp. 249–280. The hereditary family *vakfs* (pious foundations) of the marcher lords are the subject matter of virtually all recent studies on these noble families.

[48] İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest", 103–129; idem, *Fatih Devri*, pp. 137–184.

[49] İnalcık, "The Emergence of the Ottomans", pp. 285–286.

[50] Nedim Filipović, *Princ Musa i šejh Bedreddin* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1971); Dimitris Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid: Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402–1413* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. 135–194; idem, "Religious Affiliation and Political Alliances in the Ottoman Succession Wars of 1402–1413", *Medieval Encounters* 13 (2007): pp. 222–242.

[51] Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1481* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1990), pp. 91–95; John Melville-Jones, "Three Mustafas (1402–1430)", *Annuario* 5 (2004): pp. 255–276.

when Selim I (1512–1520) relied largely on the support of the Balkan *beg*s to come to power.[52]

And while the example of the Christian renegade Köse Mihal is widely used to illustrate the Ottoman-Christian cooperation and the pragmatic character of the early Ottoman polity in Anatolia, which absorbed many of the pre-existing conditions and used the administrative experience and military skills of the established elite, the history of the other noble families who played an important role in the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans is somewhat shrouded in mystery. Historical research to date has accentuated mainly the role of these families in the Ottoman military campaigns in the Balkan lands, emphasis being laid on the leading positions and relative autonomy they enjoyed in the Ottoman border (*uc*) zones and the architectural legacy they left in the frontier territories granted to them by the sultans as a reward for the role they played in the subjugation of the respective regions.[53] Of particular note are the ground-breaking studies of Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, which reveal in a consistent manner that the early Ottoman conquests in the Balkans were largely made by members of these mini-dynasties, who not only played an essential role in the military operations, but were also a factor in the nascent Ottoman state-building process as a whole and certainly should not be perceived as the obedient agents of the Ottoman sultan in the Balkan territories, since they often acted somewhat autonomously and quite divergently.[54] Undoubtedly, recent scholarship has succeeded

[52] H. Erdem Çıpa, *Yavuz'un Kavgası: I. Selim'in Saltanat Mücadelesi* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2013), pp. 145–220.

[53] Noteworthy in this respect is the pioneering work of Machiel Kiel, who drew attention to the architectural patronage of the marcher lords in a number of localities in the Balkans and thus opened the way for a more detailed analysis of their role in the governing of the border provinces. A number of Kiel's studies are available in his volume of collected articles *Studies on the Ottoman Architecture of the Balkans* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992). A more general assessment of the architectural heritage of members of the noble families and its role in "conquering" the Balkan territories is presented by the author in his "The incorporation of the Balkans into the Ottoman Empire, 1353–1453", in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 1: *Byzantium to Turkey, 1071–1453*, ed. Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 138–191.

[54] Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "La conquête d'Andrianople par les Turcs: la penetration turque en Thrace et la valeur des chroniques ottomanes", *Travaux et Mémoires* 1 (1965): pp. 439–461; eadem, "En marge d'un acte concernant le pengyek et les aqinği", 21–47; eadem, "La vita de Seyyid 'Alī Sultān et la conquête de la Thrace par les Turcs", in Denis Sinor (ed.), *Proceedings of the 27th International Congress of Orientalists, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 13th–19th August, 1967* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1971), pp. 275–276; eadem, "Seyyid 'Ali Sultan d'après les registres ottomans: l'installation de l'Islam hétérodoxe en Thrace", in *The Via Egnatia under Ottoman Rule (1380–1699). Halcyon Days in Crete II: A Symposium Held in Rethymnon, 9–11 January 1994*, ed. Elizabeth A. Zachariadou (Rethymno, 1996), pp. 45–66; Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr and Raúl Estangüi Gómez, "Autour du document de

in unveiling details from the history of these noble families, which now renders them as mini-dynasties with substantial military entourage, financial resources and landed properties, but it seems that studies still fail to situate them properly within the context of the multifaceted network of power relations in the late Balkan/Byzantine and early Ottoman Balkans.

Only recently, the figure of the founder of a different frontier lords' family, namely Evrenos Beg, was made central to the debate of the syncretic character of the Ottoman entity with regard to the absorption of the former military elite into the Ottoman system. The latest extensive studies by Heath Lowry on the Evrenosoğlu family have confirmed what was previously suspected – that the founder of this mini-dynasty, Evrenos Beg, was of Christian origin.[55] Evrenos Beg's father, whose name appears in several hitherto used Ottoman documents and dedicatory inscriptions as 'Isa Beg or Prangi 'Isa Beg, appears to have been of noble Serbian descent under the name Branko Lazar(t), as listed in an endowment deed issued by Evrenosoğlu 'İsa Beg for his pious endowment in Yenice-i Vardar.[56] This latest finding fits in nicely with a theory already expressed by the same author, namely that the spirit of latitudinarianism was a key aspect of the early Ottoman rule, the "Islamo-Christian syncretism" having its practical considerations, partially explained by the shortage of manpower, or more specifically a dearth of individuals with the skills and experience necessary to ensure military expansion and administration in the pre-existing predominantly Christian environment.[57] What makes the most recent finding of Lowry's of particular interest, however, is that it moves away from the previously widely explored phenomenon that the marcher lords were granted extensive landed properties in the border territories they conquered and it definitely suggests that they were indeed active in the territories of their previous occupation and that they might have joined the Ottoman army to actually retain the authority they enjoyed over their ancestral domains. Extend-

1386 en faveur de Radoslav Sablja (Sabya/Sampias): du beylicat au sultanat, étape méconnue de l'État ottoman", *Turcica* 45 (2014): pp. 159–186.

[55] In his earlier studies Heath Lowry rejected the widely accepted opinion that Evrenos Beg was of Karesi Turkish origin from north-western Anatolia and instead suggested that he might well have been a son of a Catalan mercenary active in the Balkans, Prangi/Franki Isa. Cf. Lowry, *The Nature*, pp. 57–59 and Heath Lowry – İsmail Erünsal, *Notes & Documents on the Evrenos Dynasty of Yenice-i Vardar (Giannitsa)* (Istanbul: Bahçeşehir University Press, 2010), pp. 123–124.

[56] Heath Lowry, *Fourteenth Century Ottoman Realities: In Search of Hâcı-Gâzi Evrenos* (Istanbul: Bahçeşehir University Press, 2012), pp. 4–5; Ayşegül Kılıç, "Evrenos Bey'in Babası Pranko Lazarı'ın (Pranko İsa) Vakfi ve Türbesi," *Ankara Üniversitesi Güneydoğu Avrupa Çalışmaları Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi (GAMER)* 1 (2012): pp. 87–99.

[57] Lowry, *The Nature*, pp. 134–135.

ing this hypothesis even further, Evrenos and his father being the case in point, one could even presume that there was personal revenge involved in Evrenos Beg's military conquests under the Ottoman banner. If it is accepted that Evrenos's father (Branko Lazar) was of Serbian descent, as his name definitely implies, it would appear that he joined the Ottomans quite early in their military advance in the Balkans and was acting, now under the name of 'Isa Beg, against his fellow Christian lords in the area. These could easily have been his own adversaries from the times before the Ottoman conquests. They may have even been his relatives. The fact that Branko Lazar/Prangi 'Isa Beg was killed on the battlefield near Radoviš (in today's Republic of Macedonia),[58] where his son erected a mausoleum (*türbe*) to commemorate the martyrdom of his father some time during the second half of the fourteenth century, substantiates the possibility that he was actually fighting against his well-known adversaries from the pre-conquest period. Further clues substantiating the former connection of Evrenos's family to Macedonia are reflected by the fifteenth-century Ottoman chronicler Neşri. An earlier source integrated into Neşri's narrative reveals that in 1389 sultan Murad I (1362–1389) entrusted Evrenos with the task of leading the Ottoman army to the battlefield of Kosovo (via Samako-Dupniçe-Köstendil) because he was familiar with the region.[59] In light of the fact that Ottoman control over these territories was yet to be established, it appears that Evrenos Beg must have acquired the knowledge about the routes and topography of the lands still controlled by the Dragaši and Mrnjavčevići before the Ottomans set foot on European soil. Although there is much more to be researched with regard to the precise descent of Branko Lazar, it seems logical to suggest that he must have been one of the local power holders who joined forces with the Ottomans to preserve their authority in the area of their previous occupation and who continued the fight for domination with their former rivals in the region.

What could, for the time being, only be supposed for the ancestral lands of Evrenos Beg and his father is clearly visible in the territories controlled by the founder of the other prominent *uc begleri* family of Christian origin, namely the Mihaloğulları. As attested by the Ottoman narrative sources, Köse Mihal, a Byzantine military chieftain of Harmankaya region north of the Sangarios River, formed an alliance with the founder of the Ottoman state Osman Beg,

[58] The territory once belonged to the principality of Konstantin Dejanović before being permanently annexed to the Ottoman realm. For the tomb of 'Isa Beg as reflected in the Ottoman documents cf. Aleksandar Stojanovski, "Zaveštanieto na Evrenos-beg vo nahijata Konče", *Glasnik* 40:1 (1996): pp. 103–110.

[59] *Kitâb-ı Cihan-Nümâ. Neşrî Tarihi*, ed. Faik Reşit Unat and Mehmed Köymen (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1957), 271–273.

joined his military raids in Bithynia quite early in the reign of Osman,[60] subsequently embraced Islam[61] and played a diplomatic role as an intermediary between the Ottomans and the other Byzantine lords in the area (most notably during the negotiations concerning the surrender of Bursa).[62] It seems that Köse Mihal also retained the rights of possession over his landed properties from the pre-conquest period. Later Ottoman documents suggest that the lands with which the founder of the family was associated were held hereditarily by his descendants as late as the last quarter of the sixteenth century, when the private property (*mülk*) was sold to another individual. Moreover, it was not only the estates of the family which were preserved within the Ottoman system, but also the leadership of a small infantry contingent (*yaya/piyade*) from the Harmankaya area, which was held on a hereditary basis by members of the family at least until the end of the sixteenth century.[63]

What is noteworthy in the case of Köse Mihal is the nature of his relation with Osman Beg during the nascent years of the Ottoman state. It appears that in the beginning it was rather an alliance that was formed between the Byzantine Michael and the Ottoman sultan Osman. It was an alliance which was mutually beneficial for both sides. On the one hand, Osman, already stationed on the high plateau of Söğüt, needed to secure his rearguard to the north when he was moving to the south en route to his summer pastures and therefore formed peaceful relations with Mihal, who was controlling the low lands of the Middle Sangarios/Sakarya valley and thus was in control of the strategic routes traversing the area under his dominance.[64] On the other

[60] Halil İnalcık, "The Struggle between Osman Gazi and the Byzantines for Nicaea", in *İznik Throughout History*, ed. Işıl Akbaygil et al (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 2003), pp. 71–77; idem, "Osman Beg", 505–506, 516–519; Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "L'installation des Ottomans", in *La Bithynie au Moyen Âge*, ed. Bernard Geyer and Jacques Lefort (Paris: Éditions P. Lethielleux, 2003), pp. 351–374, esp. 360.

[61] The conversion of Köse Mihal and its representation in the Ottoman narrative tradition is discussed at length by Krstić, "Conversion and Converts to Islam in Ottoman Historiography", pp. 62–65.

[62] Lowry, *The Nature*, pp. 56–57.

[63] Mariya Kiprovska, "Byzantine Renegade and Holy Warrior: Reassessing the Character of Köse Mihal", in *Defterology: Festschrift in Honor of Heath Lowry*, ed. Selim Kuru and Baki Tezcan = *Journal of Turkish Studies* 40 (2013): pp. 254–258.

[64] Köse Mihal not only controlled the strategic route leading from the Marmara to Ankara along the basin of the Sangarios/Sakarya River, but he also dominated the region between the Sakarya and Göynük Rivers, where two more important communication arteries traversed the area – the one linking Nicaea with Ankara via Gölpazarı and the other following the basin of the Göynük River via Geyve-Taraklı-Göynük. Rudi Paul Lindner, *Explorations in Ottoman Prehistory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), p. 50; Jacques Lefort, "Les communication entre Constantinople et la Bithynie", in *Constantinople and Its Hin-*

hand, forming an alliance with Osman was a way for the Byzantine lord of Harmankaya to secure his position as a governor of the region he controlled. The mutually beneficial relations thus established between the two sides guaranteed the life and property of the Byzantine lord in the unstable conditions of the Byzantine border zone. The general situation of despair in the Asian frontiers of the Byzantine Empire,[65] on the other hand, and the inability of the central Byzantine authorities to secure the payments and properties of the soldiers, made it easy for the local leaders such as Mihal the Beardless to align himself with the emerging masters of the region. This alliance proved to be more useful, not only for keeping intact the properties of the apostate, but for defending his military post as well.

Undoubtedly, the strong position the frontier lords' families gained during the first centuries of the Ottoman state was favoured by the peculiar conditions in the times of extensive territorial expansion. Entrusted with the leadership of most of the military expeditions in the Balkans and subsequently with the administration of the border regions, these frontier lords accumulated large resources in terms of spoils of war, captives, and private territorial estates granted to them by the sultans in return for their military deeds. What is noteworthy regarding the authority they enjoyed during the first centuries of the Ottoman state is that they emerged as a political factor as well.[66] As already mentioned, they played a key role in the period of Ottoman civil war (1402–1413) at the beginning of the fifteenth century after the dismemberment of Bayezid I's empire as a consequence of the Ottomans' defeat at Ankara by Timur's army.[67] What is indicative of this period is that it was a time of complex political alliances between the Christian powers, individual power brokers and Ottoman pretenders to the throne. Although the period of the dynastic Ottoman wars offered an excellent opportunity for the Christian powers to unite against the common enemy, no such alliance was formed. In-

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terland. Papers from the Twenty-seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993, ed. Cyril Mango and Gilbert Dagron (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), pp. 207–218; idem, "Les grandes routes médiévales", in *La Bithynie au Moyen Âge*, ed. Geyer and Lefort, pp. 461–472; Raif Kaplanoğlu, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kuruluşu* (Istanbul: Avrasya Etnografya Vakfı, 2000), pp. 51–55.

[65] Angeliki Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II, 1282–1328* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 78–79, 82–88; Mark Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army: Arms and Society, 1204–1453* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), pp. 74–75; Savvas Kyriakidis, *Warfare in Late Byzantium, 1204–1453* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 23–28, 78; idem, "The Revolt of the General Kassianos in Mesothynia (1306)", *Byzantion Nea Hellás* 33 (2014): pp. 165–180.

[66] İnalcık, "The Emergence of the Ottomans", pp. 285–286.

[67] Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1481*, pp. 55–73; Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid.*

stead, those powers supported "whichever of Bayezid's sons appeared to offer them the most advantages and pose the least danger".[68] The Byzantine emperor Manuel II, Venice, Genoa, the Wallachian *voyvoda* Mircea the Elder, as well as the rival Serbian lords Stefan Lazarević and George Branković all pursued their own political agendas by establishing alliances with different pretenders to the Ottoman throne but failed to form a coalition between themselves. Under these circumstances, similar to the Balkan Christian powers, the families of the *uc begleri*, most prominently those of Evrenos, Mihal, and Paşa Yiğit, also pledged their support to the claimant who would guarantee their own interests. Thus, alienated with the reconciliatory policies of prince Süleyman toward his Christian neighbours, they switched to Musa Çelebi's camp, who pursued the aggressive politics of his father and thus complied with the demands and secured the livelihood of the frontier lords. The support of the *uc begleri*, on the other hand, practically ensured the victory of Musa over his brother Süleyman in Rumeli. The subsequent centralizing policies, followed by Musa Çelebi, which aimed at undermining the power of the *uc begleri* and replacing them with his own men, resulted in the alienation of these *beg*s, the most vigorous of whom – Evrenos and Mihaloğlu Mehmed – escaped to join the ultimate victor in the dynastic wars, Mehmed Çelebi, in Anatolia. Finally, Musa, brought to the Balkans largely through the support of the *voyvoda* of Wallahia Mircea the Elder, the Byzantine emperor, and the *beglik*s of Karaman and Isfendiyar, who sought to prevent unification of the Ottoman realm under the rule of Süleyman, was defeated by Mehmed Çelebi, who had the support of the discontented frontier lords of Rumili, the confederacy of Dulkadir in Anatolia, the Byzantines, and the Serbian lords under the leadership of Stefan Lazarević. What is symptomatic in this period of diverse political alliances and divided loyalties is the strength that the frontier lords acquired in terms of their political aspirations – indeed they played an influential role in this turbulent period and the support they offered to any of the pretenders was decisive in their eventual victory over their enemies.[69]

What can be observed even through the evolving power of the *uc begleri* in the emerging Ottoman entity is that it was rather a history of alliance from the outset, mutually beneficial for both the local elites and the Ottoman rulers. Initially, forming an alliance with the Ottomans assured to both Evrenos and Mihal the preservation of their possessions and military posts. Favoured by the preferential position that they enjoyed under the circumstances of Ottoman expansionistic conquest, the *uc begleri* emerged as distinct power holders within

[68] Kastritsis, "Religious Affiliation and Political Alliances", 223.

[69] Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, pp. 135–142, 161–171, 188–194; idem, "Religious Affiliation and Political Alliances", pp. 222–242.

the Ottoman entity who sought the alliance of an Ottoman ruler who would guarantee the preservation of their growing authority. On the other hand, it was the accommodationist policies of the first Ottoman rulers towards the established elites and institutions which faciliated their expansion and establishment in the conquered lands. Although initially vital for the emerging Ottoman entity, the increased power of the *beg*s of the marches gradually threatened the very authority of sultanic supremacy in turbulent times. An alliance was sought and subsequent concessions were granted to the marcher lords on the part of the sultans in order to preserve their allegiance and thus secure the sultans' sovereignty. A complete subsuming of these potential power brokers within the Ottoman system was actually possible only with a territorial as well as institutional and bureaucratic consolidation of the Ottoman state under the control of an authoritarian ruler. This process seems to have reached a certain firmness under the rule of Mehmed II, whose centralistic policies and increasingly bureaucratized state could overpower the authority of the *uc begleri*. It seems that their semi-autonomous position was considerably weakened with the increase of the personal sultanic army, the Janissaries. The *uc begleri* were appointed *sancak begi*s on the Ottoman border territories, but were now under the direct command of the *beglerbegi*. The conscription of their retinues, the *akıncı*s, also seems to have been fully incorporated into the Ottoman military system, as evidenced by their regular recording in the empire registration system of the auxiliary forces.[70]

With the ever-increasing centralizing Ottoman policy following the conquest of Constantinople, and with the growing Safavid threat in the East, a process of marginalizing different social groups in the Ottoman realm, including the Turkmen tribes, 'heterodox' dervishes and frontier warriors, forced all these segments of the Ottoman social order to form yet another alliance in response to their diminished position. This alliance could be observed both in the literary production of these groups and in their architectural patronage. Thus, a special type of hagiographical literature, namely the *velâyetname*s of certain Sufi saints, developed and was textualized at the time of these dervish groups' marginalization; a typical feature of this genre seems to be its emphasis on conquests, holy war and heroism, praising the military exploits of the famous *uc begleri*s' families and openly criticizing the sultanic authority.[71] The emergence of this *velâyetname* literature could be read as a symbol of both groups' (dervishes' and frontier lords') dissatisfaction with the centralistic policies of the

[70] Mariya Kiprovska, "The Military Organization of the *Akıncı*s in Ottoman Rumelia" (MA thesis, Bilkent University, Ankara, 2004).

[71] Zeynep Yürekli Görkay, "Legend and Architecture in the Ottoman Empire: The Shrines of Seyyid Gazi and Hacı Bektaş" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2005), pp. 57–73.

Ottoman sultans.[72] On the other hand, the fact that the frontier lords' families of Mihal, Evrenos and Malkoç patronized architecturally the principal dervish hospices in Anatolia and the Balkans (Seyyid Battal Gazi, Hacı Bektaş and Şücaeddin Veli in today's Anatolian Turkey, as well as Otman Baba, Kıdemli Baba, Akyazılı Baba and Demir Baba in today's Bulgaria), attests to the coalition that was formed between the dissatisfactioned mendicant dervishes on the one hand and the marginalized state-founding dynasties and their retinues on the other against the centralistic imperial policies of the Ottoman state.[73]

The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans was not purely disruptive, as was commonly emphasized by the nationalistic historiographies. Many administrative divisions, institutions, as well as members of the Balkan elites were incorporated into the Ottoman system. Part of the Balkan nobility did not disappear with the Ottoman conquest, rather it became submerged in the Ottoman system, trying to preserve to some extent its previous status and authority while seeking to survive in the transition from the Byzantino-Slavic system to the Ottoman domination. It was certainly easier for the lower-ranking military officers, who largely retained the privileges they enjoyed in the former conditions, to be subsumed under the new order, which brought relative security to their position. As for the higher Balkan nobility, it had its own reasons for coping with or opposing the Ottoman suzerainty, fighting against rivals from the pre-conquest times or simply retaining rights on holdings. Yet, although they were incorporated seemingly smoothly into the Ottoman system, while trying to preserve their status and position, members of the pre-conquest elites formed new alliances even within the Ottoman realm. There was a constant reconfiguration of mutual interests and power relations which was relentlessly renegotiated in line with the evolution of circumstances over time, and which has to be considered an indispensable aspect of the evolving imperial ideology in the process of early Ottoman state building.

[72] The declining prominence of the frontier lords is masterfully contextualized within the framework of the Ottoman dynasty's centralizing policy by Zeynep Yürekli, who examines the raider-commanders' architectural patronage of Bektashi shrines in the context of the increased social cohesion of the marginalized segments of Ottoman society. See her *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire: The Politics of Bektashi Shrines in the Classical Age* (Ashgate, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies, 2012).

[73] Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire*; Mariya Kiprovska, "The Mihaloğlu Family: *Gazi* Warriors and Patrons of Dervish Hospices", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 32 (2008): pp. 173–202.

The Human Cost of Warfare: Population Loss During the Ottoman Conquest and the Demographic History of Bulgaria in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Era

Grigor Boykov

INTRODUCTION

Hardly any other period in the entire history of the Balkans raises as much scholarly controversy and debate as the time of the Ottoman conquest of the region. Although these events took place more than half a millennium ago, they still have a powerful influence over the hearts and minds of people in the Balkans. The history of the fall of the medieval Christian Balkan states still remains extremely emotionally loaded and sparks deep sentiment, because almost without exception the foundations of national mythology of the Balkan nations are built around an anti-Turkish or anti-Ottoman discourse. Therefore, instead of presenting concepts derived on the basis of objective analysis of the sources at hand, scholarly discussions in the past quite often reflected the political fashion of the day and were largely fueled by national sentiment, thus marginalizing genuine academic dispute. Moreover, the historical narrative of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans appears to be even further confused by the "traditional" split between scholars trained in Byzantine, Slavic or Ottoman studies. Examining the period in accordance with their own methodological tools and perceptions, different disciplines have produced parallel accounts of identical events, or, more accurately, of very similar processes that not only did not match, but also often greatly differed from one another. When one adds to this picture the output of national Balkan historiographies, which almost unanimously portrayed the loss of sovereignty as the greatest threat ever posed before the very existence of the Christian nations in the Balkans, the extremes in evaluating the history of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans become accentuated on account of the loss of valuable pieces of reliable information that became blurred out in the general picture of these vibrant times.

The idea that scholars trained in Byzantine, Ottoman, and Slavic studies as well as archeologists must join efforts and expertise in producing a more balanced

and reliable account of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans is not unique. Recent decades have witnessed a number of cases in which such cooperation brought encouraging results that had a sensitive impact on a particular academic field. However, the pioneering efforts in combining the expertise of scholars from different disciplines do not predate the late 1970s, when Harvard University's Dumbarton Oaks and the Center for Byzantine Studies at the University of Birmingham initiated a study group that focused on the period of transition between the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires.[1] In more recent times, cooperation between scholars studying the history of the Balkans has expanded even further in demonstrating the enormous potential of a collective effort while studying the past of the region.[2] An increasing number of scholarly initiatives universally seek to bypass the established disciplinary limitations by creating study groups, formed by researchers from diverse academic backgrounds, thus prospectively compensating for the inevitable shortcomings of a single-disciplinary approach.[3] Nonetheless, taken beyond the realm of ideologically charged discourse, to a large extent the general theme of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans is yet to be studied in sufficient depth. The contribution intended by the present volume clearly demonstrates the presence of numerous lacunae that academic research

[1] The proceedings of the innovative workshop held in Washington D.C. in May 1982 were collected in the seminal volume edited by Anthony Bryer and Heath Lowry, *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society* (Birmingham: The University of Birmingham Centre for Byzantine Studies; Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1986).

[2] One such admirable effort in combining methodology used in different fields with regard to population estimates is *Reconstructing the Past: Population Trends in Mediterranean Europe (3000 B.C.–A.D. 1800)*, edited by John Bintliff and Kostas Sbonias (Oxford: Oxbow, 1999). *A Historical and Economic Geography of Ottoman Greece: the Southwestern Morea in the 18th Century*, edited by Fariba Zarinebaf, John Bennet, and Jack L. Davis (Princeton, NJ: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2005) can be recommended as a good interdisciplinary effort, covering smaller territory, but in much greater detail.

[3] While interdisciplinary research is an established trend in modern Humanities and examples are abundant, I would like to take the opportunity to mention the latest contributions of the study group at the University of Sofia that I am privileged to be a part of. Moreover, the initial idea for the conference that took shape in the present volume was born after a thought-provoking lecture delivered by Prof. Oliver Jens Schmitt at the Seminar for Regional History at the University of Sofia. See for instance *Power and Influence in South-Eastern Europe, 16th–19th Century*, edited by Maria Baramova, Plamen Mitev, Ivan Parvev and Vania Racheva (Berlin: Lit, 2013); *Bordering Early Modern Europe*, edited by Maria Baramova, Grigor Boykov, and Ivan Parvev (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015); *Social Networking in South-Eastern Europe, 15th–19th Centuries*, edited by Maria Baramova, Grigor Boykov, and Ivan Parvev (Berlin: LIT, forthcoming); *From War to Peace: The Ottoman 'Long War' of 1683–1699 with the Lega Sacra Powers and Treaties of Carlowitz 1699,* edited by Colin Heywood and Ivan Parvev (Leiden–New York–Köln: E. J. Brill, forthcoming).

must fill before an unbiased, balanced, and conclusive account of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans can take a more definitive shape.

The demographic history of the Balkans at the eve of the conquest and during the subsequent years of Ottoman domination, which forms the focus of this paper, was probably one of the most fiercely debated and controversial topics in the related scholarship during the second half of the twentieth century. The seemingly irreconcilable views of scholars from different backgrounds originate in the definitive nature of the results which their research had to provide. Because of relying on scholarly or even scientific methods in making population estimates, the outcome offered by the historians dealing with the demographic history of the early Ottoman Balkans stands almost unchallengeable, unless one is willing to undertake literally the same research in order to verify the results or juxtapose them with completely different sources and methodology. As if to complicate the matter even further, it is difficult to perceive with full confidence the demographic data and its interpretations offered by most pioneering works as an outcome of unbiased and purely academic analysis. On the contrary, it seems quite plausible that a profound political message was encoded in many of the scholarly publications examining the demographic processes in the Ottoman Balkans.

This paper has a manifold purpose. Firstly, by accentuating on some of the dominant works that focused on the historical demography of the Balkans in the period in question it aims to illustrate that their general conclusions were strongly influenced, to say the least, by the politics of the day, while the target audience also went far beyond purely academic circles. Secondly, the present contribution is an attempt to briefly evaluate the main sources for the historical demography of the Balkans of the late Middle Ages and Early Modern period, thus proposing a strategy with the potential to underpin successful research. Lastly, it offers my speculative views on the general population figures of fifteenth-, sixteenth- and to seventeenth-century Ottoman Bulgaria. In spite of all the inevitable shortcomings of the data presented in the paper, it will hopefully demonstrate the degree of achievable accuracy in population estimates in the period and can possibly offer the necessary quantitative basis for further demographic studies of the entire Ottoman Balkans.

MAJOR TRENDS IN THE DEMOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE OTTOMAN BALKANS

The demographic situation of the Balkans at the eve of the Ottoman conquest is shrouded in obscurity. The lack of reliable sources from the period that allow population reconstructions make the general demographic publications that deal with the late-medieval Balkans sporadic, as their conclusions and the data

they present can only be regarded as tentative and somewhat speculative.[4] The uncertainty regarding general population figures in the pre-Ottoman Balkans leaves a great deal of room for diverse interpretations of the demographic consequences and changes that took place after the conquest. Historiographical traditions that examine the demographic changes in the Ottoman Balkans, a reflection of a multitude of nuanced publications, each with their own particularities, can be provisionally grouped in three major currents that differ according to the aspects of the Ottoman conquest to which they give preference and which they chose to highlight.

Briefly, historians from the first group, who can be labeled proponents of the "catastrophic concept", tend to regard the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans as a highly destructive wave that swept away almost everything that stood on its way. The local Christian population was enslaved and put to the sword en masse as the survivors were forced to seek refuge in the mountains, thus leaving the fertile lands of the open plains to the conquerors. Although it is apparent that this apocalyptic concept of the dramatic loss of local population accompanying the Ottoman conquest is a nineteenth-century construct of the emerging Balkan nationalist historiography, it is not without its advocates today and has proponents in every local history tradition. In its most extreme version, the fact that the Ottoman invasion had catastrophic consequences for the autochthonous population was "proven" in a scholarly publication in the 1970s by the Bulgarian historian Hristo Gandev.[5] Based on original Ottoman documents, namely sources that seemingly can be used for reliable quantitative analysis and therefore giving credibility to the conclusions, the author argued that in the course of the Ottoman conquest only the Bulgarian nation lost, i.e. was killed, enslaved, deported to Anatolia, the victims numbering 680,000 of a total fifteenth-century Bulgarian population of 890,000.[6] If Gandev's figures are taken as trustworthy, one must inevitably conclude that the Ottoman conquest of Bulgaria was indeed accompanied by the severe destruction of the settlement

[4] Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones, *Atlas of World Population History* (New York: Penguin, 1978), pp. 110–114; Norman John Greville Pounds, *An Historical Geography of Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 220; Josiah Cox Russell, "Population in Europe 500–1500", in Carlo M. Cipolla, ed., *The Fontana Economic History of Europe*, Vol. 1, *The Middle Ages* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1976), pp. 25–71; idem, "Late Medieval Balkan and Asia Minor Population", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 3:3 (1960): 265–274.

[5] Hristo Gandev, *Bălgarskata narodnost prez 15 vek. Demografsko i etnografsko izsledvane* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1972). A revised version of the volume was published in English, Hristo Gandev, *The Bulgarian People During the 15th Century: A Demographic and Ethnographic Study* (Sofia: Sofia-Press, 1987).

[6] Gandev, *Bălgarskata narodnost*, pp. 117–131.

network and a full-scale demographic catastrophe. At this point only personal taste and stretch of the imagination determine the extent to which the picture of mass destruction in Bulgaria can be projected over the entire Balkans.

The apparent ideological coverage of Gandev's monograph, which well suited the then Bulgarian government's campaign against the Muslim minorities of the country, is easily perceivable. Moreover, a dreadful methodological mistake in the use of the Ottoman sources in this publication compromises all population figures presented by the author. Gandev's chief methodological mistake lies in his treatment of the Ottoman administrative term *mezraa* (a field under cultivation or a large farm with no permanent settlement),[7] which he chose to interpret as a Christian village destroyed by the Ottomans during the conquest.[8] Nevertheless, in spite of these obvious shortcomings, the catastrophic theory was welcomed in political circles in Bulgaria, and hence a new "revised" edition of the book appeared as late as 1989.[9] The thesis of the full-scale demographic catastrophe was embraced in several later scholarly publications, but more importantly it was also adopted in a large number of popular writings, which are more likely to have an impact on public opinion.[10] The political program fueling the "catastrophic concept" of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans is quite obvious; therefore the theory can hardly be regarded as a genuinely academic product.[11] The extreme conclusions of the proponents of the devastating char-

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[7] Halil İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 162–167; İlhan Şahin, "Mezraa", in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı* İslâm *Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 29, pp. 546–548.

[8] Gandev's error was noted by other Bulgarian historians and his concept was severely criticized. Strašimir Dimitrov, "Mezrite i demografskija kolaps na bălgarskata narodnost prez XV v.", *Vekove* 6 (1973): 50–65; Vera Mutafčieva, "Za točnite metodi v oblastta na istoričeskata demografija. Njakoi beležki vărhu metodikata v dve novi monografii", *Istoričeski Pregled* 4 (1973): 134–141. Cf. Gandev's reply to the criticism, Hristo Gandev, "Vărhu metodičeskite văprosi, svărzani s knigata 'Bălgarskata narodnost prez XV vek", *Istoričeski Pregled* 6 (1973): 91–102; idem, "Teorija i izsledovatelska praktika v istoričeskata demografiya," *Vekove* 1 (1975): 56–67. Among recent critics of Gandev is Evgeniy Radušev, "Demografski i etnoreligiozni procesi v Zapadnite Rodopi prez XV–XVIII vek. Opit za preosmisljane na ustojčivi istoriografski modeli", *Istoričesko Bădešte* 1 (1998): 46–89.

[9] Hristo Gandev, *Bălgarskata narodnost prez 15 vek. Demografsko i etnografsko izsledvane* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1989[2]). The English version of Gandev's monograph was released two years earlier.

[10] Petar Petrov, *Sădbonosni vekove za bălgarskata narodnost: kraja na XIV vek-1912 g.* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1975); idem, ed., *Po sledite na nasilieto: dokumenti i materiali za nalagane na isljama*, vols. 1–2 (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1987–88); idem, ed., *Pet veka pod jatagana i korana: Dokumenti i materiali za isljamizacija i asimilacija na bălgari (kraja na XIV-1912 g.)*, vols. 1–3 (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sv. Kliment Ohridski", 2012).

[11] For a critical overview of some concepts of Balkan nationalist historiography, including the catastrophic consequences of the conquest, see Antonina Zhelyazkova, "Islamization in the

acter of the conquest, however, appeared to be advantageous for their natural opponents and were conveniently used by the historians of the second group.

The second major group of researchers examining the demographic history of the Balkans stands in opposition to the extreme theses of Balkan nationalist historiographies. Nevertheless, its members seem to oppose the rather politically driven conclusions of the Balkan historians with similarly politically inspired argumentation, stressing the mass Turkish migration into the Balkans and portraying the Ottoman sultans as almighty rulers who basically not only influenced the demographic processes in the Balkans, but also had the full capacity to control and direct them in accordance with their personal will or needs.[12] It is somewhat ironic that the advocates of the "Turkish" concept tacitly embrace the unfounded conclusions of the "catastrophists", which present the post-conquest Ottoman Balkans, or at least their eastern parts, as almost emptied of their autochthonous population. Without necessarily accentuating the notion that the hypothetical lack of population was due to supposedly very violent warfare waged by the sultans against the late medieval Balkan states, Ömer Lütfi Barkan and his Turkish colleagues argued that virtually all Muslims in the early Ottoman Balkans were ethnic Turks who were settled there by the Ottoman rulers.[13] Disregarding the role of religious conversion almost completely, the Turkish historians attributed to these Anatolian colonists a major role in the process of reestablishing urban and rural life in the allegedly devastated and depopulated Balkans.[14] The political

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Balkans as a Historiographical Problem: the Southeast-European Perspective", in *The Ottomans and the Balkans: a Discussion of Historiography*, edited by Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden–Boston–Köln: Brill, 2002), pp. 223–265.

[12] Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "Quelques observations sur l'organisation économique et sociale des villes ottomanes des XVI^{e} et XVII^{e} siècles", *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin pour l'histoire comparative des institutions*, vol. 7, *La Ville 2: Institutions économiques et sociales* (Bruxelles: De Boeck Université, 1955), 291.

[13] Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "Tarihî Demografi Araştırmaları ve Osmanlı Tarihi," *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 10 (1951–1953): 1–26; idem, "Essai sur les données statistiques des registres de recensement dans l'Empire ottoman aux XV^{e} et XVI^{e} siècles", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 1:1 (1957): 9–36; idem, "Research on the Ottoman Fiscal Surveys", in Michael A. Cook, ed., *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East from the Rise of Islam to the Present Day* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 163–171; idem, "Quelques remarques sur la constitution sociale et demographique des villes balkaniques au cours des XV^{e} et XVI^{e} siècles", *Istanbul à la jonction des cultures balkaniques, méditerranéennes, slaves et orientales, aux XVI^{e}–XIX^{e} siècles* (Bucharest: Association Internationale d' Études du Sud-Est Européen, 1977), 279–301.

[14] For instance, a good illustration is a co-authored paper in a special issue of the Indiana University-based *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, devoted to the Turks in Bulgaria, which was undoubtedly inspired by the then political developments in the communist country and the persecution of the Turkish minority. İlhan Şahin, Feridun Emecen, and Yusuf Halaçoğlu, "Turkish Settlements in Rumelia (Bulgaria) in the 15th and 16th Centuries: Town and Village Population", *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 4:2 (1989): 23–40. The entire volume

message of promoting Turkishness pervading many of these academic publications is likewise easily perceivable. Often they appear to be a direct response to the extreme nationalistic views expressed by some Balkan and, more specifically, Bulgarian historians. What seems particularly intriguing in this case is the ability of Turkish national historiography to transform the anti-Turkish rhetoric of the Balkan nationalistic concept (i.e. the catastrophic impact of the conquest) into an idea that is beneficial to the Turkish side. Turkish settlers in the Balkans are portrayed as those who populated the deprived regions of the Balkans and respectably established a Turco-Muslim tradition in virtually every sphere of human activities in the region. With the collapse of the regimes in ex-communist Balkan countries and the relative normalization of political relations between Turkey and its Balkan neighbors in the past two decades, the extreme proponents of the Turkish concept have given way to more moderate opinions, expressed on the basis of careful academic research. The current political situation, however, shows disturbing signs that powerful political figures and their visions can again have a dominant influence over a historiographical trend, emphasising the profound cultural change in the Balkans that followed the conquest.

The third group of scholarly publications dealing with demographic consequences of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans stands equally distant from the above mentioned two traditions. Indeed, one might speculate that it emerged from a desire to control the predictable consequences of the publications of the "catastrophists". A number of publications by Nikolay Todorov and historians from his circle bitterly opposed the catastrophic thesis, seeing it as a concept that serves the Turkish national ideology well. It certainly opposed the idea that it was the Turks who repopulated the Balkans, thus bringing novelties not only in the population balance of the peninsula, but also in every sphere of life. On the contrary, this group of researchers tends to see a large-scale continuity of human existence and activities, including demographic processes, from the period prior to the Ottoman conquest. Basing their argumentation on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Ottoman archival sources, the advocates of the "continuity thesis" tend to stress the predominantly Christian character of the Ottoman Balkans.[15] Downplaying drastically the importance of Turkish colonization in

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of the journal was reprinted as a book, Kemal Karpat, ed., *The Turks of Bulgaria: the History, Culture and Political Fate of a Minority* (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 1990); İlhan Şahin, "XV. ve XVI. Yüz Yılda Sofya-Filibe-Eski Zağra ve Tatar Pazarı'nın Nüfus ve İskân Durumu", *Türk Dünyası Arıştırmaları* 48 (1987): 249–256; Refet Yinanç, "Arşivlerdeki Tahrir ve Evkaf Defterlerine Göre Bulgaristan'da Türk Varlığı", in *Bulgaristan'da Türkler Semineri II, 20–22 Mart 1986* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1986), 13–18.

[15] Nikolay Todorov, "Za demografskoto săstojanie na Balkanskija poluostrov prez XV–XVI vek", *Annuaire de l'Université de Sofia, Faculté de Philosophie et d'Histoire* 53:2 (1959–1960): 191–232; idem, "Turskata kolonizacija i demografskite promeni v bălgarskite zemi", in Hris-

the region and reducing it in scale to isolated cases of deportations of an exclusively nomadic population, the supporters of this thesis argued that in spite of the violent nature of the conquest, the Balkans, as a whole, went through these turbulent times relatively unaffected.[16] Moreover, in their perspective, the explanation for the presence of masses of Muslims in the Ottoman documents is not a result of colonization by ethnic Turks from Anatolia, as suggested by their Turkish opponents, but was due to a large-scale religious conversion of the local Balkan population.[17]

The political message encoded in the publications of those historians who propagated almost absolute continuity in the post-conquest Ottoman Balkans likewise seems quite obvious. More notably, by downplaying the Turkish colonization, these scholars explain the presence of millions of Muslims in the Balkans as a result of religious conversion, which was executed under direct or indirect pressure of the Ottoman government.[18] Thus developing the idea of general forceful conversion in the Balkans under Ottoman rule, the proponents of the "continuity thesis" not only sought to elevate the role of Christians in Ottoman society, but unfortunately also paved the way for the repressive campaign of the Bulgarian communist government in the late 1980s, which aimed at "restoring" the proper Christian names and identity of all Muslims in the country.

This brief overview of the dominant trends in the historiography of the demographic consequences of the Ottoman conquest, as schematic and inaccurate as it may be, aimed at a simple purpose, namely to highlight the deeply rooted interdependence between historical research and politics in the Balkans in the second half of the twentieth century. The close connection between scholarship and politics invites some serious reservations about the reliability of the conclusions offered by any of the sides in the debate. In light of this, the

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to Gandev, ed., *Etnogenezis i kulturno nasledstvo na bălgarskija narod* (Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiya na Naukite, 1971), pp. 69–76.

[16] Strašimir Dimitrov, "Etničeski i religiozni procesi sred bălgarskata narodnost prez XV–XVII v.", *Bălgarska etnografija*, vol. 1 (Sofia: Bălgarska Akademija na Naukite, 1980), 16–34; idem. "Kăm demografskata istoriya na Dobrudža prez XV–XVII v.", *Izvestija na bălgarskoto istoričesko družestvo* 35 (1983): 27–61.

[17] Nikolay Todorov, "Po njakoi văprosi na balkanskija grad prez XV–XVII v.", *Istoričeski Pregled* 1 (1962): 32–58; idem, *Balkanskijat grad XV-XIX vek: socialno-ikonomičesko i demografsko razvitie* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1972). A supplemented version of his monograph also appeared in English. Nikolai Todorov, *The Balkan City 1400–1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983). Strašimir Dimitrov, "Za priemstvenostta v razvitieto na Balkanskite gradove prez XV–XVI vek", *Balkanistika* 2 (1987): 5–17. Mariya Todorova and Nikolay Todorov, "Problemi i zadači na istoričeskata demografija na osmanskata imperija", *Balkanistika* 2 (1987): 18–46.

[18] This thesis was severely criticized by Zhelyazkova, "Islamization in the Balkans".

question of the true human cost of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and the subsequent demographic development of the peninsula, as important as it may be from an academic point of view, regretfully still remains unsatisfactorily answered. One of the major pitfalls of many of the studies to date is their failure to comprehend that the Ottoman conquest was not static, but was rather a continuous process which lasted for well over a century. Moreover, the accounting for demographic changes that took place between two points in time requires relatively accurate data at least for the starting and end points of the period under study, as the period itself must not be too long. None of these conditions seem to be fulfilled by the historiography to date, as readers are often confronted with conclusions based on guesswork for time-point A and speculation as to time-point B, which is sometimes stretched over such a long period that natural demographic trends could have shifted several times. Needless to say, this fact alone makes the final results and arguments quite dubious.

RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGICAL NOTES FOR THE DEMOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE BALKANS UNDER OTTOMAN RULE

Every student of demographic history of the late-medieval and early Ottoman Balkans who aims at pursuing independent, objective academic research inevitably faces several significant methodological limitations which must be taken into close consideration. Firstly, those who wish to examine the degree of destructiveness of the conquest and to account for the level of inevitable population loss accompanying any such military endeavor on a Balkan-wide scale must certainly consider very carefully the prolonged time span of the conquest. While the Ottomans first raided and seized Balkan territories in the mid-fourteenth century, their incursions towards the Central and Western Balkans continued until the end of the fifteenth century and the first decades of the sixteenth century.[19] In other words, this interval is long enough to allow a

[19] A number of excellent publications discuss the confused chronology of the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans. They range from general works such as Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age 1300–1600* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973); Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1481* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1990), Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993[2]), John V. A. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: a Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987) to more specific publications focusing on particular regions, the most noteworthy of which are the more recent publications of Machiel Kiel, "The Incorporation of the Balkans into the Ottoman Empire, 1353–1453," in Kate Fleet, ed., *The Cambridge History of Turkey. Volume I: Byzantium to Turkey, 1071–1453*

thorough shift of the general demographic trend of the region. Therefore, the fact that the Ottomans confronted completely different conditions in different areas accounts for the presumption that the post-conquest demographic situation in these regions is likely to be closely dependent on pre-conquest conditions.

Thus, for instance, the Ottoman attacks on Greece and Bulgaria took place in a period of what was probably an unprecedented population drop in the region.[20] The exact impact of the Black Death on the Balkans still remains undefined, but an increasing number of publications demonstrate that the peninsula was not spared by the pandemic, which ravaged most of Europe only a few years before the Ottomans set foot on European soil.[21] It seems that the parts of the peninsula most affected by the pestilence were the coastal towns and open plains of the eastern Balkans, i.e. the territories that faced the Ottoman challenge first. If one takes into account the numerous local wars waged between Byzantines, Bulgarians, Serbs and Catalans in the area, along with two Byzantine civil wars preceding the conquest, one can assume that the Ot-

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 138–191; Heath W. Lowry, *The Shaping of the Ottoman Balkans, 1350–1550: the Conquest, Settlement & Infrastructural Development of Northern Greece* (Istanbul: Bahçeşehir University Publications, 2008).

[20] By the end of the fourteenth century, all of medieval Bulgaria and most of modern Greece's Thrace and Macedonia were conquered by the Ottomans. This was either a result of campaigns initiated by the sultan, or a consequence of persistent raids and pressure on the part of the frontier lords in Ottoman service (*akıncı ucbeyleri*) like Evrenos Bey or the descendants of Köse Mihal, one of Osman Gazi's closest war companions. Cf. Heath W. Lowry, "Early Ottoman Period", in *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey*, edited by Metin Heper and Sabri Sayarı (Abingdon–New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 5–14.

[21] Michael W. Dols, "The Second Plague Pandemic and Its Recurrences in the Middle East: 1347–1894," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 22:2 (1979): 162–189, offers comparable figures for population loss in Europe, the Middle East, and the Balkans. Nükhet Varlık, "Disease and Empire: A History of Plague Epidemics in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire (1453–1600)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2008), pp. 10–61 covers the early period and contains some information on the period of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans. Cf. also Idem. "New Science and Old Sources: Why the Ottoman Experience of Plague Matters," in Monica H. Green, ed., *Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death*, Inaugural double issue of *The Medieval Globe* 1 (2014): 193–227, Heath Lowry, "Pushing the Stone Uphill: The Impact of Bubonic Plague on Ottoman Urban Society in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries", *The Journal of Ottoman Studies/Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 23:2 (2004): 93–132, Daniel Panzac, *La peste dans l'Empire ottoman, 1700–1850* (Leuven: Peeters, 1985), passim, Bogumil Hrabak, "Kuga u balkanskim zemljama pod Turcima od 1450. do 1600. godine," *Istorijski glasnik* 1–2 (1957): 19–37, Hristo Matanov, "Čumni pandemii i istorija. Justinjanovata čuma i Černata smărt: dva povratni perioda na srednovekovnite Balkani", in *Civitas humano-divina v čest na prof. Georgi Bakalov*, edited by Cvetelin Stepanov and Veselina Vačkova (Sofia: Tangra Tanakra, 2004), pp. 339–347.

tomans faced a model of a somewhat declining population in the eastern parts of the peninsula.

In contrast, a century later, when the invasion was directed toward the Central and Western Balkans, the conquerors were confronted with a completely different demographic situation. On the one hand, it appears that these parts of the peninsula were never as severely affected by the Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century as the eastern parts. On the other hand, by the time of the conquest the negative trend, if it ever existed there, must have been overturned and replaced by a steady growth, as was the case in many places in Western Europe. If the territories taken in the sixteenth century are added to this picture, then the differences between eastern and western parts of the Balkans become even more apparent. Thus in all probability in the Central and Western Balkans the Ottomans were faced with an entirely different demographic situation, and therefore their means of influence over it were much more limited.

The second important methodological point that one must bear in mind when studying the demographic consequences of the Ottoman conquest is that the Central and Western Balkans are in a far superior position for such quantitative analysis. Because they fell under Ottoman rule later, the late Middle Ages in these parts of the peninsula are better represented in terms of domestic sources that can provide an idea about the pre-Ottoman demographic situation. Furthermore, probably more importantly, the Ottoman sources that can provide data for the demographic history of the region were drawn up only a few years after the conquest, thus often presenting direct evidence for the changes that took place shortly after it.[22] On the contrary, the eastern parts of the Balkans preserved less evidence about the pre-Ottoman population, Month Athos being a notable exception, while the earliest preserved Ottoman censuses are dated to between 50 and 60 years, in a few cases, and in most to 100–120 years after the conquest of the area.[23] Therefore, the task of a researcher at-

[22] The earliest preserved Ottoman register (1431) which covers parts of modern Albania is published by Halil İnalcık, *Hicrî 835 Tarihli Sûret-i Defter-i Sancak-i Arvanid* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1954). Other Ottoman registers dating from the mid-fifteenth century are published by the ex-Yugoslavian orientalists: Hazim Šabanović, *Krajište Isa-Bega Ishakovića: zbirni katastarski popis iz 1455. godine* (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, 1964); Hamid Hadžibegić, Adem Handžić and Ešref Kovačević, transls. and eds., *Oblast Brankovića: opširni katastarski popis iz 1455. Godine*, vols. 1–2 (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut, 1972); Ahmed Aličić, *Turski katastarski popisi nekih područja zapadne Srbije XV i XVI vek*, vol. 1 (Čačak: Međuopštinski istorijski arhiv, 1984); idem, *Poimenični popis Sandžaka vilajeta Hercegovina* (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, 1985); idem, *Sumarni popis sandžaka Bosna iz 1468/69. godine* (Mostar: Islamski Kulturni Centar, 2008)

[23] More distant from the date of the conquest, the earliest Ottoman registers of the eastern part of the peninsula have generally been studied far less and are less well known. Moreover, unlike their counterparts in the Western Balkans, widely published in translation

tempting to observe the demographic changes in the Eastern Balkans after the conquest is much more unfavorable. The superiority of the Western Balkans in offering more information is also attested by the availability of Western sources covering some parts of the region. They can be extremely useful not only for ascertaining some demographic data, but also for checking the reliability of results based on Ottoman archival sources.[24]

In spite of the general validity of the two points made above, the demographic consequences of the conquest for a given region in the Balkans, be it eastern or western, can also differ according to the level of resistance that the Ottomans faced. Thus, regardless of the demographic trend of the time in some places, the conquest was accompanied by bitter confrontation and relentlessly destructive warfare; one can therefore naturally expect that the population loss in such areas was much higher in comparison to other neighboring regions that were integrated less violently. Moreover, as a punitive measure and to avoid potential disobedience, in some instances the Ottomans removed the entire population of a resisting city or region, replacing it with Muslim Turkish colonists. This was for instance the case in Belgrade and some parts of Srem, whose residents were deported to Gallipoli and Istanbul on the arrival

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into modern language and therefore usable by a wider audience, the publications of registers of the eastern parts are scattered and unsystematic. *Izvori za bălgarskata istoriya. Turski izvori za bălgarskata istorija, serija XV–XVI*, vol. 2, edited by Nikolay Todorov and Boris Nedkov (Sofia: Bălgarska Akademija na Naukite, 1966) published some fragments from *tahrir* registers, housed in Bulgaria. Other samples of fifteenth-century registers for different regions were published by Dušanka Bojanić-Lukać, *Vidin i Vidinskijat sandžak prez 15–16 vek: dokumenti ot arhivite na Carigrad i Ankara* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1975); Rumen Kovačev, *Opis na Nikopolskija sandžak ot 80-te godini na XV vek* (Sofia: Narodna Biblioteka Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodiy, 1997). Recently, several early registers of the Eastern parts of the Balkans were published by Halil İnalcık, Evgeni Radushev and Uğur Altuğ, transls. and eds., *1445 Tarihli Paşa Livâsı* İcmal *Defteri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2013). İnalcık also published the long-awaited earliest register after the fall of Constantinople, Halil İnalcık, *The Survey of Istanbul 1455* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2012). More than a dozen fifteenth-century Ottoman *tahrir* registers that cover the eastern part of the Balkans still await their publication.

[24] For such a comparison between Ottoman and European sources and their use in demographic studies see Nenad Moačanin, "The Poll-Tax and Population in the Ottoman Balkans", in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, edited by Colin Imber and Keiko Kiyotaki (London–New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005), pp. 77–89, idem. Slavonija i Srijem u razdoblju osmanske vladavine (Slavonski Brod: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2001), passim; idem. *Town and Country on the Middle Danube*, 1526–1690 (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2006), pp. 183–232, idem. "Do the 18th Century *Cizye* Registers in Comparison with the Earlier Inventories Make the Research of the Demographic Tendencies on the Balkans Easier?", in *Iz praktikata na osmanskata kancelarija*, edited by Rumen Kovačev (Sofia: Narodna biblioteka "Sv. sv. Kiril i Metodiy", 2011), pp. 165–170.

of Muslim settlers from the eastern parts of the Balkans.[25] The anti-Ottoman post-conquest uprisings were generally suppressed in a particularly violent manner and could have resulted in drastic drops in population too. In this respect, the final two campaigns of Mehmed II, which crushed the resistance of Skanderbeg, may be an emblematic illustration of the Ottoman ability to disrupt the demographic processes in an entire region. The extremely violent march of the Ottoman army into Albania resulted in some places in population losses of up to 75% of the entire population through the army's laying waste to settlements and devastation.[26]

The fourth essential methodological issue that a student of demographic history of the early Ottoman Balkans cannot neglect is the reliability of the sources. The problem is twofold, since in order to place a veritable judgment about the human cost of the conquest one needs data for two time-points which are as close as possible to the events in question. While the difficulties finding quantitative information in pre-Ottoman sources are apparent, the Ottoman documentary sources, at first glance, are much more promising in their potential to deliver reliable demographic information. Upon closer inspection, however, the Ottoman registers appear to be much more complicated for direct

[25] On the deportations of Serbs to Gallipoli see Feridun Emecen, "The History of an Early Sixteenth Century Migration – Sirem Exiles in Gallipoli", in *Hungarian-Ottoman Military and Diplomatic Relations in the Age of Süleyman the Magnificent*, edited by Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (Budapest: Lorand Eötvös University and Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1994), pp. 77–91. More studies on the topic are collected and reprinted in *Galipoljski Srbi: naselja, poreklo stanovništva, običaji*, edited by Borisav Čeliković (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2012). Deportation of the Muslim population westward is less known, but an increasing number of publications offer more evidence about it. There is no known source that explicitly specifies that Muslims from SE parts of the Balkans were deported westward, but the sudden unexplainable decrease of the Muslim population in several urban centers can plausibly testify to it. Several important towns such as Edirne, Filibe, Tatar Pazarcık, İpsala, Yenice-i Vardar, etc. lost a sizable portion of their Muslim communities in the late 1520s to early 1530s. For details, see Grigor Bojkov, *Tatar Pazardžik ot osnovavaneto na grada do kraya na XVII vek. Izsledvania i dokumenti* (Sofia: Amicitia, 2008), pp. 48–55, idem, "Mastering the Conquered Space: Resurrection of Urban Life in Ottoman Upper Thrace (14th–17th c.)" (Ph.D. diss., Bilkent University, 2013), 115–124, Heath Lowry and İsmail Erünsal, *The Evrenos Dynasty of Yenice Vardar: Notes & Documents* (Istanbul: Bahçeşehir University Press, 2010), pp. 120–122; Stefan Dimitrov, "Naselenie i selišhta v Sakar planina i prilezaštija i rajon prez XV–XVI v." (Ph.D. diss. Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2013), p. 102, Hristo Hristozov, "The Ottoman Town of İpsala from the Second Half of the 14th to the end of the 16th century", in *Cities in South Eastern Thrace: Continuity and Transformation*, edited by Grigor Boykov, Ivaylo Lozanov and Daniela Stoyanova (Sofia: University of Sofia Press, forthcoming).

[26] Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Skanderbeg: der neue Alexander auf dem Balkan* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2009), pp. 101–102, idem. "Skanderbeg et les sultans: anatomie d'une rébellion contre l'Empire ottoman," *Turcica* 43 (2011): 58–59.

use in demographic studies, and any conclusions based on their uncritical use in a Balkan-wide context can result in highly misleading conclusions.

The Ottoman tax registers (*tahrir defterleri*) that appear to be the most suitable source for demographic history of the fifteenth and sixteenth-century Balkans have long attracted scholarly attention. Many established scholars demonstrated the general value of these sources for the demographic and social history of Southeastern Europe under Ottoman rule.[27] A number of other publications also discussed in great analytical detail the shortcomings of the Ottoman tax registers and demonstrated the degree of their limitations when used for demographic history.[28]

Bulgarian scholars also attempted to utilize the late fifteenth-century large synoptic registers of the poll tax (*cizye*) paid by the non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire for historical demography, but the problematic nature of these sources, which can result in misleading conclusions was demonstrated by Turk-

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[27] See the publications of Barkan cited in note 12 and idem, "Türkiye'de İmparatorluk Devirlerinin Büyük Nüfus ve Arazi Tahrirleri ve Hâkana Mahsus İstatistik Defterleri (I)", *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 1 (1940): 20–59 and (II) 2 (1940): 214–247, Géza Dávid, "The Age of Unmarried Male Children in the *Tahrir-Defter*s (Notes on the Coefficient)", *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 31:3 (1977): 347–357, Bistra Cvetkova, "Early Ottoman *Tahrir Defter*s as a Source for Studies on the History of Bulgaria and the Balkans", *Archivum Ottomanicum* 8 (1983): 133–213, Gyula Káldy-Nagy, "Der Quellenwert der Tahrir Defterleri für die osmanische Wirtschaftsgeschichte", in Hans Georg Majer, ed., *Osmanistische Studien zur Wirtschafts-und Sozialgeschichte. In Memoriam Vančo Boškov* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1986), pp. 76–83. Nicoară Beldiceanu and Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "Règlement ottoman concernant le recensement (première moitié du XVI^{e} siècle)", *Südost-Forschungen* 37 (1978):1–40, published a detailed document, instructing how the registration was to be carried out.

[28] Heath Lowry coined the term "defterology" and advanced the discussion on the reliability of the sources: Heath W. Lowry, "The Ottoman Tahrir Defterleri as a Source for Social and Economic History: Pitfalls and Limitations", in idem, *Studies in Defterology. Ottoman Society in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1992), pp. 3–18. For a recent overview of the field, see Suraiya Faroqhi, "Ottoman Population", in *The Cambridge History of Turkey. Volume 2: The Ottoman Empire as a World Power, 1453–1603*, edited by Suraiya Faroqhi and Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 356–403. Cf. also Mehmet Öz, "Tahrir Defterlerinin Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırmalarında Kullanılması Hakkında Bazı Düşünceler", *Vakıflar Dergisi* 22 (1991): 429–439, Géza Dávid, "Tahrir Defterlerinin Neşri Hakkında Notlar," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 13 (1993): 45–48, Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, "The Defter-i Mufassal of Kameniçe from ca. 1681 – An Example of Late Ottoman Tahrir. Reliability, Function, Principles of Publication," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 13 (1993): 91–98, Kemal Çiçek, "Osmanlı Tahrir Defterlerinin Kullanımında Görülen bazı Problemler ve Metod Arayışları", *Türk Dünayası Araştırmaları Dergisi* 97 (1995): 93–111, Feridum Emecen, "Mufassaldan İcmale", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 16 (1996): 37–44; Metin Coşgel, "Ottoman Tax Registers (*Tahrir Defterleri*)", *Historical Methods* 37:2 (2004): 87–100.

ish historians.[29] In a reply inspired by Todorov's publication, Ömer Barkan underlined the limitations of the *cizye* registers, especially when used in their most condensed version, as Todorov had.[30] The Turkish scholar raised several important points related to the poll tax registers from the fifteenth century that demonstrate the shortcomings of these sources. Barkan rightfully noted that these sources do not contain any information about the tax-payers who resided in territories controlled by the pious foundations (*vakıf*, pl. *evkaf*). In some regions, such as Bulgarian Thrace for instance, this was about half of the population, while in other places, such as Eastern Bulgaria (Aydos, Ahyolu, Karınabad, Varna), the entire population belonged to the estates of the large pious foundations. Therefore, the point raised by the Turkish scholar is far from being of minor importance. Furthermore, Barkan stressed the fact that it is not possible to define with any certainty how many individuals or families composed the basic fiscal unit (*cizye hane*) in these documents, and therefore their usage for demographic studies is very problematic and uncertain.[31] In spite of their apparent shortcomings and inability to offer absolutely accurate demographic data, the large synoptic empire-wide poll tax registers from the last decades of the fifteenth century can provide a fairly realistic idea of Christian population density in the Balkans. With all due skepticism, following the conclusions in Todorov's publications, one can quite confidently note that the density of the Christian population on the map of the late-fifteenth-century Balkans increases from east to west.[32] This picture, as much as it lacks nuances

[29] Todorov, "Za demografskoto săstojanie". Later the document was published in translation in Bulgarian and in French. Nikolay Todorov, Asparuh Velkov, *Situation démographique de la Péninsule balkanique (fin du XV^e s.-début du XVI^e s.)* (Sofia: Editions de l'Académie bulgare des sciences, 1988).

[30] Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "894 (1488/1489) Yılı Cizyesinin Tahsilâtına ait Muhasebe Bilânçoları", *Belgeler* 1:1 (1964): 1–119.

[31] Abundant information concerning the typology, structure and composition of the *cizye* registers is provided by Machiel Kiel, "Remarks on the Administration of the Poll Tax (Cizye) in the Ottoman Balkans and Value of Poll Tax Registers (Cizye Defterleri) for Demographic Research", Études *Balkaniques* 4 (1990): 70–104. Cf. also Oktay Özel, "Avarız ve Cizye Defterleri", in *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bilgi ve* İstatistik/*Data and Statistics in the Ottoman Empire*, edited by Halil İnalcık and Şevket Pamuk (Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 2000), pp. 35–50. Cf. also general publications on the implementation of the poll tax in the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire: Boris Nedkoff, *Die* Ğizya *(Kopfsteuer) im osmanischen Reich: mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Bulgarien* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1942); Hamid Hadžibegić, "Džizja ili Harač", *Prilozi za Orientalnu Filologiju i Istoriju Jugoslovenskih Naroda pod Turskom Vladavinom* 3–4 (1952–1953): 55–133; Halil İnalcık, "Djizya", *Encyclopedia of Islam*[2] vol. 2, pp. 559–566; Yavuz Ercan, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Gayrimüslimlerin âit Ödedikleri Vergiler ve Bu Vergiler Doğurduğu Sosyal Sonuçlar," *Belleten* 55:213 (1991): 371–391.

[32] Todorov, "Za demografskoto săstojanie", 210–214.

and as much its data must be perceived only as tentative, demonstrates that the major demographic trends of the pre-conquest Balkans are somewhat adequately reflected in the Ottoman documentary sources. The Ottoman tax registers of all kinds, in spite of their limitations, are of indispensable value when one examines the displacement of the population as results of state-controlled deportations, external and internal migration, stability of the settlements network, etc. It has already been mentioned that population and taxation registers, prepared under Venetian or Habsburg administration, are of great significance, but, likewise, when used for demographic purposes they are not without their problems and, most notably, they only cover some minor parts at the periphery of the peninsula, such as parts of the Peloponnesus, Dalmatia, or the Aegean islands.

All that said, the chief question of this paper, namely whether a comprehensive account of the human cost of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans is achievable, still remains unanswered. In my view, the current state of research hardly allows a relatively reliable assessment on a Balkan-wide scale. Anyone attempting such a general overview risks falling into the traps set by the products of national ideology, since the lack of sources and reliable population data are particularly suited for highly speculative concepts. In order that a relatively balanced and trustworthy picture of the demographic consequences of the Ottoman conquest is achieved, modern scholarship must be able to assemble all pre-Ottoman data that can provide any quantitative information. The Byzantine and Slavic narrative sources are certainly of great importance, but probably of greater weight are the results from archaeological excavations and field surveys.[33] Juxtaposing the valuable archeological information regarding the medieval settlement networks and their durability with the earliest Ottoman registers of a given region can allow a cautious researcher to draw an even more cautious conclusion concerning the overall destructiveness of the conquest and its probable claim of human life in this particular region. Such conclusions, however, are representative only for the given region under study. The fact that even in a limited, homogeneous territory the demographic consequences of the conquest can show great variation clearly suggests that results obtained for one region can hardly be used for illustration of the same processes in another.[34] Thus, despite

[33] For instance Andreas Zimmermann, Johanna Hilpert, and Karl Peter Wendt, "Estimations of Population Density for Selected Periods Between the Neolithic and AD 1800", *Human Biology. Special Issue on Demography and Cultural Macroevolution* 81:2 (2009), 357–380 offer innovative methodology for population density estimates in periods that lack reliable source information. Certainly archaeology has many other tools that can provide some general population statistics.

[34] One such example is provided by the territory of Upper Thrace in Bulgaria, where drastic demographic changes went accompanied continuity of existing settlement networks in a

the encouraging results of modern scholarship, the time when we will be able to offer a thorough and well-argued assessment of the human cost of the Ottoman conquest on a Balkan-wide scale still appears quite distant.

This, however, certainly does not mean that modern scholarship should give up on this task, nor that a growing number of excellent informative and, most importantly, unbiased publications covering different parts of the Balkans have not been published in recent years. On the contrary, the current tendencies in historiography give signs for great optimism and quite clearly pave the way for our better understanding of the Ottoman conquest in general and of the demographic changes it brought in particular. [35] This rather pro-

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relatively small territory. See Grigor Boykov, "Balkan City or Ottoman City? A Study on the Models of Urban Development in Ottoman Upper Thrace 15th–17th c.", in *Proceedings of the Third International Congress on the Islamic Civilisation in the Balkans 1–5 November 2006, Bucharest, Romania*, edited by Halit Eren, Sadık Ünay (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2010), pp. 69–85 for the different trends in the demographic development of the major towns in the region. The eastern part, colonized almost entirely by Turkish nomads from Asia Minor, is examined in Milena Petkova-Encheva, "Poselištna mreža i găstota na naselenieto v Iztočnia djal na Trakijskata nizina prez părvata polovina na 16 vek (kazite Stara Zagora, Čirpan, Nova Zagora i Haskovo)", in *Etničeski i kulturni prostranstva na Balkanite. Sbornik v* čest *na prof. d.i.n. Cvetana Georgieva*, vol. 1, edited by Svetlana Ivanova (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 2008), pp. 244–289. Central and western parts of the plain differed greatly from the eastern in regard to settlement patterns and preservation of pre-conquest villages – see Hristo Hristozov, "Demografski i etnoreligiozni procesi v rajona na Asenovgrad prez XVI v.", *Istoričeski Pregled* 3–4 (2012): 86–131; Damjan Borisov, "Kazata Tatar Pazară (Pazardžik) prez 1530 g.", *Istorija* 22:4 (2014): 387–407.

[35] The list of publications presented here is far from complete. It rather aims to list major recent publications related to the demographic development of the region in which preference is given to publications in non-Western languages, which are for this reason less well known. Above all, such a list of publications must begin with Machiel Kiel, who has been very productive, publishing more than 200 scholarly articles that deal with the demographic and architectural history of almost all parts of the Balkans. His latest views on the Ottoman conquest of the region, with clear reference to the important role of the Turkish element in the later period, are summarized in the overview mentioned above: Kiel, "The Incorporation of the Balkans into the Ottoman Empire". Other noteworthy contributions among recent publications on the demographic history of the Balkans in the period in question are: Hristo Matanov, *Văznikvane i oblik na Kjustendilski sandžak (XV–XVI vek)* (Sofia: IF-94, 2000); Rumen Kovačev, *Samokov i samokovskata kaza prez XVI vek, spored opisi ot istanbulskija osmanski arhiv* (Sofia: Narodna biblioteka Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodiy, 2001); Evgenij Radušev, *Pomacite: hristijanstvo i isljam v Zapadnite Rodopi s dolinata na r. Mesta, XV – 30-te godini na XVIII vek* (Sofia: Narodna Biblioteka Sv. Sv. Kirill i Metodij, 2008); Ema Miljković-Bojanić, *Smederevski sandžak 1476–1560: zemlja, naselja, stanovništvo* (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 2004); Ema Miljković and Alexandar Krstić, "Na raskršću dve epohe: kontinujitet i promene društvene structure u Braničevu u 15. veku", *Istorijski* časopis 56 (2008): 279–304; Jelena Mrgić, *Severna Bosna: 13–16. vek* (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 2008); Tatjana Katić, *Opširni popis prizrenskog sandžaka iz 1571. godine*

longed and uneasy path of knowledge passes through the necessity of a whole multitude of studies focused on particular regions of the Balkans. Ideally, these must be undertaken by teams of scholars, or by exceptional individuals, who can combine expertise in Byzantine, Slavic, and Ottoman studies and use it in conjunction with the achievements of archaeology – site excavations and field surveys. Only such regional studies can best overcome the methodological limitations and observe in detail the peculiarities of the demographic changes that took place during and after the Ottoman conquest. They have the full potential to examine in great analytical depth all local circumstances that predetermined the sequence of the events which shaped the diverse process of the Ottoman conquest.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF BULGARIA UNDER OTTOMAN RULE: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

In full awareness of the fact that the author of the present article clearly lacks the skills listed above, an attempt will be made at offering a modest contribution on the large theme of the demographic history of the Ottoman Balkans. The second part of this paper seeks to provide a relatively reliable picture of the demographic processes and general population data of Ottoman Bulgaria in the period fifteenth to seventeenth century. The most complete and comprehensive overview of settlement networks in Bulgaria in the first centuries of Ottoman rule was undertaken by Cvetana Georgieva in her study of the "Bulgarian space" in the fifteenth–seventeenth centuries.[36] Although the author is unable to present her readers with precise population statistics, her analysis of scholarship to date clearly reveals the existence of several zones in Bulgaria in which the settlement patterns deferred greatly. According to Georgieva's findings, the settlement networks in the high plains of western Bulgaria were not

(Belgrade: Istorijski Institut, 2010); Aleksandar Stojanovski and Dragi Ǵorgiev, *Naselbi i naselenie vo Makedonija: XV i XVI vek* (Skopje: Institut za Nacionalna Istorija, 2001); Dragi Ǵorgiev, *Naselenieto vo makedonsko-albanskiot graničen pojas (XV–XVI vek)* (Skopje: Institut za Nacionalna Istorija, 2009); Sıddık Çalık, Çirmen *Sancağı* Örneğinde *Balkanlar'da Osmanlı Düzeni (15.–16. Yüzyıllar)* (Ankara: Bosna-Hersek Dostları Vakfı, 2005); Kornelija Jurin Starčević, "Demografska kretanja u selima srednjodalmatinskog zaleđa u 16. i početkom 17. stoljeća", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 54 (2004): 139–168; Aladin Husić, "Demografske prilike u srednjodalmatinskom zaleđu početkom 16. stoljeća", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 55 (2005): 227–242 and the publications of see Nenad Moačanin, quoted in note 24.

[36] Cvetana Georgieva, *Prostranstvo i prostranstva na bălgarite, XV–XVII vek* (Sofia: Lik, 1999), pp. 92–148.

disrupted by the Ottoman conquest and were therefore inhabited almost exclusively by Christians.[37] These conclusions are confirmed by recent case studies that demonstrate a high population density in isolated high valleys, such as the valley of Razlog, enclosed by the Rhodopes, Rila, and Pirin mountains or the plain of Dupnica.[38] The vast open plains, such as Thrace or the high plateau of Dobrudža, were in Georgieva's view "depopulated" prior to and in the course of the Ottoman conquest and were for this reason heavily colonized by Anatolian Muslims.[39] Studies based on archaeological sources demonstrate that indeed both Thrace and Dobrudža were loosely populated in the two centuries preceding the Ottoman conquest.[40] Georgieva defines the mountain regions and the vast Danubian plain as zones in which continuity prevailed, but where new Muslim settlements infiltrated the inherited settlement network.[41]

Despite the fact that Georgieva's overview of the settlement networks offers little of value to demographic studies, it is highly significant, since it succeeds in demonstrating the complexity of settlement patterns in the early Ottoman Bulgaria. As stated above, the demographic development of a given region was in direct connection to its pre-conquest state. Therefore the demographic situation reflected in the Ottoman registers is likely to reflect the probable population density of the period prior to the conquest and to attest to the degree of destructiveness of the warfare which established the power of the Ottoman dynasty. Nevertheless, in spite of the growing number of valuable contributions, the present state of knowledge about Bulgaria in the fourteenth and early

[37] Georgieva, *Prostranstvo i prostranstva*, pp. 94–104.

[38] For instance in 1516 the town of Razlog (Mehomiye) had close to 600 Christian households, i.e. in terms of population the town was larger than the important city of Nicaea (İznik). Grigor Bojkov, "Sădbata na Razložkata kotlovina v usloviyata na osmanska vlast (XVI–XIX v.)", in *Razlog: istorija, tradicii, pamet,* (Blagoevgrad: Irin-Pirin, 2009), pp. 53–78; idem, "Dupnitsa i dupnishkata kotlovina prez osmanskata epoha (XV–XVIII v.)", in, eds., *Istorija na Dupnica i Dupniško*, edited by Aleksandăr Grebenarov et al. (Sofia: Institut za istoričeski izsledvanija, 2015), pp. 73–104.

[39] Georgieva, *Prostranstvo i prostranstva*, pp. 112–123.

[40] Kamen Stanev, "Beležki vărhu selištnata sistema meždu severnata periferija na Rodopite i r. Maritsa v kraja na XII–XIV v.", in *Stenimahos, Stanimaka, Asenovgrad. Prinos kăm izuchavaneto na priemstvenostta i razvitieto na sotsialno-ikonomicheskata i duhovna istoriya na grada i regiona*, edited by Grigor Bojkov and Damjan Borisov (Asenovgrad: Dikov, 2014), pp. 7–39, idem, *Trakija prez rannoto srednovekovie* (Veliko Tărnovo: Faber, 2012), which also offers abundant archeological data on the late Middle Ages. Georgi Atanasov, "Etnodemografski promeni v Dobrudža (X–XVI v.)", *Istoričeski Pregled* 2 (1991): 75–89, idem, "Pogled kăm Dobrudžanskia Dunavski brjag", *Istoričeski Pregled* 8–9 (1992): 13–31. Ottoman Dobrudža is studied in detail by Strašimir Dimitrov, *Istorija na Dobrudža*, vol. 3 (Sofia: Bălgarska Akademija na Naukite, 1988).

[41] Georgieva, *Prostranstvo i prostranstva*, pp. 105–112, 123–137.

fifteenth centuries does not permit its students to take the demographic history of the period beyond the realm of conjecture.

The analysis of demographic information in this article begins with the fragmented data from the fifteenth century. Furthermore it establishes 1530 as a chronological point in the Ottoman period in which the entire population of present-day Bulgaria can be relatively safely estimated, thus allowing further estimates, based on data extrapolation.[42] The population statistics presented below come as a result of the thorough study and careful examination of more than 200 Ottoman tax registers of a different type, housed in the archives in Istanbul, Sofia, and Ankara.[43] It seems that a study on the demographic history of any region in the Ottoman Empire, based on such a long range of tax registers, has not been attempted to date. In this respect the results presented in the following pages are experimental and they need to be perceived with some degree of condescension, since errors are inevitable. Nevertheless, the overall picture of demographic dynamics in Bulgaria in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries presented in the paper must be generally reliable and fairly accurate.

Like any demographic study that covers territory as wide as today's Bulgaria (roughly 111,000 sq. km) over a period of nearly three centuries, the results presenting the demographic fluctuations reflects a simplified, condensed version of a more nuanced local reality. Besides, the lack of reliable quantitative data for particular localities in a specific period forced me, in some instances, to extrapolate data based on the demographic trends of the surrounding areas. Moreover, as one can expect, the large number of Ottoman tax registers used here, namely detailed and synoptic *tahrir defter*s, registers of the pious foundations (*evkaf defter*s), detailed and synoptic registers of extraordinary levies (*avarız defter*s), and registers for the poll tax paid by the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire in their variety (*mufassal, icmâl, muhasebe cizye defter*s) showed various shortcomings and lacunae that had to be overcome in the process of compiling adequate population samples.

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[42] Research on the demographic data presented in this paper was supported by the Bulgarian Science Fund as part a larger academic project (FFNNIPO1201263) which in a collective effort aims at estimating the probable GDP and standard of living in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Lands (1500–1870–2000). I would like to express my gratitude to the Science Fund, whose funding made possible my research in Istanbul, and to Mariya Kiprovska for sharing results from her own research. Moreover, I thank Damyan Borisov and Hristo Hristozov who also contributed valuable assistance and critical remarks.

[43] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi in Istanbul, the Oriental Department of the Bulgarian National Library "Sts. Cyril and Methodius" in Sofia and Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü, Kuyud-ı Kadime Arşivi in Ankara. A complete list of the registers examined in this paper, their type and data is presented in Appendix 1.

The greatest methodological difficulty for presenting exact demographic data certainly arises from the fact that the Ottoman tax registers utilize a specific fiscal unit, "*hane*" (lit. from Persian "house"), which contains no indication as to how many individuals are included in one such unit. Historians have debated the meaning and the size of this fiscal unit for several decades, agreeing on the fact that the term *hane* in the Ottoman *tahrir* registers from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries stands for one household, i.e. a married couple and their young children.[44] The exact family size and what multiplier must be used in order to turn an Ottoman household from the *tahrir* registers into individuals is also an issue keenly debated in modern historiography, but in spite of the numerous contributions that have fostered the debate, the "old thesis" of Barkan that one must apply 5 as quotient for turning *hane* into people still remains dominant and is also used in this paper.[45] Moreover, method-

[44] Barkan and others, cited in notes 12 and 25. Cf. also Nejat Göyünç, "Hane Deyimi Hakkında", İstanbul Üniversitesi *Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi* 32 (1979): 331–348, Bruce McGowan, "Food supply and taxation on the Middle Danube (1568–1579)", *Archivum Ottomanivum* 1 (1969): 139–196. A critical overview of the literature on the topic hitherto is provided by Marija Todorova and Nikolay Todorov, "Problemi i zadači na istoričeskata demografija na Osmanskata imperija", *Balkanistika* 2 (1987): 18–46, published later in English translation as Maria Todorova and Nikolay Todorov, "The Historical Demography of the Ottoman Empire: Problems and Tasks", in *Scholar, Patriot, Mentor: Historical Essays in Honor of Dimitrije Djordjević*, edited by Richard Spence and Linda Nelson (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1992), pp. 151–172. Cf. too in this regard Colin Heywood, "Between Historical Myth and Mythohistory: The Limits of Ottoman History", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 12 (1988): 315–345 and, more recently, Fatma Acun, "Osmanl Tarihinin Genişleyen Sınırları: Defteroloji", *Türk Kültürü* İncelemeleri *Dergisi* 1 (2000): 319–332 and Oktay Özel, "Population Changes in Ottoman Anatolia during the 16th and 17th Centuries: The 'Demographic Crisis' Reconsidered", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36:2 (2004): 183–205.

[45] Dávid, "The Age of Unmarried Male Children", Heath Lowry, "Changes in Fifteenth-Century Ottoman Peasant Taxation: The Case Study of Radilofo", in Bryer and Lowry, *Continuity and Change*, 23–37, Leyla Erder, "The Measurement of Pre-industrial Population Changes: The Ottoman Empire from the 15th to 17th Century", *Middle Eastern Studies* 11 (1979): 284–301. The literature on family size is growing, but publications covering the period prior to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are almost entirely absent. Detailed studies on the extant inheritance lists (*tereke*) may prove to be of key importance for research on family size. Cf. Traian Stoianovich, "Family and Household in the Western Balkans, 1500–1870", *Mémorial* Ömer *Lûtfî Barkan* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien Maisonneuve, 1980), pp. 189–203, Dimitris Dimitropoulos, "Family and tax registers in the Aegean Islands during the Ottoman period", *The History of the Family* 9 (2004) 275–286, Malcolm Wagstaff, "Family Size in the Peloponennese (Southern Greece) in 1700", *Journal of Family History* 26:3 (2001) 337–349, Maria Todorova, *Balkan Family Structure and the European Pattern: Demographic Developments in Ottoman Bulgaria* (Budpaest–New York: CEU Press, 2006), pp. 99–125, Kemal Karpat, "The Ottoman Family: Documents Pertaining to Its Size", *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 4 (1987): 137–145.

ological difficulties become much greater when one attempts to present population statistics on the basis of the poll tax registers and their fiscal units, *cizye hane*s.[46] Bearing in mind the critical remarks raised in the historiography to date, I assumed that in most cases, as long as it concerns the territory covered in this study, the fiscal unit *hane* in *cizye* registers in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries greatly reflects the content of *hane* in the *tahrir*s and can be seen as a single household.[47] This argumentation is developed in length in the relevant section below, where I also argue that the registers of the extraordinary levies, even the large *mufassal*s from the 1640s, which at first glance appear to be excellent sources, provide terribly misleading population data and that in the current state of understanding of these sources they must not be used for demographic history.

All estimates of population totals that cover the territory of present-day Bulgaria presented in the present study are largely hypothetical, because they are based on average household size, which does not change over time. The disadvantages of using a steady quotient of 5 in a period in which differing demographic trends prevailed are apparent, but adhering to one multiplier allows corrections in the future, when better knowledge of the average family size in Bulgaria in the period in question will allow greater precision than the statistical data offered in this article. In spite of these discrepancies in the Ottoman tax registers, along with some others that have not been mentioned, the potential of the sources must not be underestimated by modern historians. Contrary to what Suraiya Faroqhi implies in her contribution to the influential Cambridge history of Turkey, that the Ottoman tax registers have at best a very limited capacity even to portray the general population trends,[48] it can be argued that when these sources are skilfully handled by historians familiar with their peculiarities, the *defter*s can reveal the general demographic picture of almost every region controlled by the Ottomans and provide data permitting detailed quantitative analysis. Naturally, the limitations of the sources force modern researchers to propose methodological approaches that overcome their shortcomings. Except for the recommendations of Heath Lowry, embraced by modern scholarship as guiding principles that Ottoman *tahrir*s must always be

[46] Moačanin, "The Poll-Tax and Population in the Ottoman Balkans", Kiel, "Remarks on the Administration of the Poll Tax", Linda Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy. Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire 1560–1660* (Leiden–New York–Köln: Brill, 1996), pp. 100–108, Elena Grozdanova, "Za danăčnata edinica hane v demografskite proučvanija", *Istoričeski Pregled* 3 (1972): 81–91, eadem, *Bălgarskata narodnost prez XVII vek. Demografsko izsledvane* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1989), pp. 62–65.

[47] The same was not true for the *cizye* registers of the fifteenth century.

[48] Faroqhi, "Ottoman Population", pp. 358–364.

used in their longest possible series and in conjunction with other registers,[49] the experience gained from the systematic study of over 200 registers for this paper advances the development of the methodology for research on Ottoman taxation records. When Ottoman tax registers of any kind are used for historical demography, it is always preferable that one follows an approach that combines a detailed study on the local specific conditions with an overview of the entire province, or at least a sub-province (*sancak* or *liva*). This, on the one hand, reduces the chance of errors in general estimates of population totals due to misunderstanding local circumstances, such as an apparent lack of a substantial portion of taxable population in a region, which might have been registered in pious foundations or in separate records because the taxpayers performed certain specialized duties (*voynuk*s, *müsellem*s, etc.). On the other hand, as much as knowledge of local circumstances is essential, a conclusion based on the study of a limited area can also be misleading. The observable demographic trend in a smaller or larger region can concur, but it could also substantially differ from what is observed on a larger, provincial scale. Therefore, an ideal approach for scholars studying demographic history on the basis of Ottoman tax registers is to combine strong regional knowledge of as many localities as possible and compare it with population statistics for a wider territory. Combined with the various methodological suggestions hitherto proposed by historians, this approach can greatly limit the scope for error and offer a relatively accurate picture of the demographic processes in any Balkan region. Needless to say, the abundance of reliable estimates of population totals in the Ottoman period is the strongest possible way to discard dominant theses fueled mostly by political motives rather than genuine academic goals.

For the purposes of this article I decided to split the territory of modern Bulgaria into four major zones. This approach was, to certain extent, predetermined by the territorial distribution of the Ottoman tax registers, but it also sought to follow, albeit only superficially, the distribution of "Bulgarian" space, based on the settlement network analysis proposed by Georgieva.[50] Thus four somewhat matching zones were formed and labeled as the West (W), North Center (NC), North East (NE), and South (S) zones.[51] The western zone

[49] Lowry, "The Ottoman Tahrir Defterleri: Pitfalls and Limitations", pp. 8–15. He suggests 7 important principles that must be considered when historians use *tahrir*s: the documents must be used in conjunction with other contemporary records; the detailed (*mufassal*) registers are preferable to the summary (*icmâl*) form; they should be used serially; the size of *hane* is unknown; the information in these records is more useful for non-Muslim areas; earlier registers are more reliable; the format and terminology of the registers changed in the Süleymanic Age, i.e. after the 1520s.

[50] See above, Georgieva, *Prostranstvo i prostranstva*, pp. 92–149.

[51] See Appendix 2 – Maps.

(27,000 km^2) occupies the westernmost part of today's Bulgaria. It is separated from the rest of the country by an imaginary line that begins on the Danube near Kozloduj, runs south to include the plains of Sofia and Ihtiman and, following the western foots of the Rhodope Mountains, it finishes near Goce Delčev (Ott. Nevrekob), thus enclosing the high Rila and Pirin mountains and the valleys of the Struma (Ott. Ustruma) and Mesta (Ott. Karasu) rivers. The north-central zone (30,500 km^2) is a territorial piece of Danubian Bulgaria that is enclosed by the Danube from the north and by the Balkan range from the south. It basically encompasses the Ottoman sub-province of Nicopolis (Ott. Niğbolu *sancağı*), which has the region of Vraca (Ott. İvraca) at its western and that of Šumen (Ott. Şumnu) at its eastern edge. The northeastern zone (16,000 km^2) to a large extent reflects the Ottoman *sancak* of Silistra, including the flat terrain of Dobrudža, the low plateau of Deliorman, and the Black Sea coast and its regions from Dobrudža to Thrace, thus containing the areas of Karnobat (Ott. Karın Abad), Aytos (Ott. Aydos), and Pomorie (Ott. Ahıyolu). The southern zone is the largest in size (37,800 km^2), generally occupying the vast plane of Upper Thrace along with parts of the Rhodopes, Sakar and the northern slopes of the Strandža mountains. As noted above, this zonal division is not based on the Ottomans' view of territorial distribution, but it was developed in the course of research for this article, in the hope that it will ease the presentation of results. Certainly, the present study does not claim to cover the territory of modern Bulgaria with absolute precision. On the contrary, it is quite possible that settlements located in today's bordering regions are missing in the overall estimates of the population or that others lying outside present-day Bulgaria were included in the general numbers. Furthermore, the administrative division, as seen on the appended maps, is rather tentative, drawn up for exclusively illustrative purposes; thus it should not be perceived as reflecting the changing nature of Ottoman administrative units at any given historical moment.

THE POPULATION OF BULGARIA IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

As mentioned above, in the present state of our knowledge a complete and fully reliable reconstruction of Bulgaria's population totals on the eve and after the conquest is hardly possible. Nevertheless, this study will attempt to assemble the accessible Ottoman documentation from the fifteenth century, thus seeking to contribute to further studies which can shed more light on the actual degree of destruction brought by the Ottoman incursions in Bulgaria or by the crusading armies and possibly account for the inevitable loss of life in the process. Undoubtedly the *defter*s used here do not reflect the earliest Ottoman registration

prepared after the conquest. On the contrary, the information in some of the preserved tax registers strongly suggests that at least two more registrations were carried out in the preceding years, but regrettably their results must have been either lost or inaccessible to me.[52] The Ottoman sources used below do not cover the entire territory of Bulgaria, but are scattered and provide data about different parts of the country in a rather unsystematic manner. Thus some of the essential regions of Ottoman Bulgaria are either missing from this sample or are underrepresented due to the incomplete nature of the data. Moreover, all documents are merely fragments from larger registers whose sometimes substantial parts have been lost. Or these fragments were compiled at different times and hence it is practically impossible to assemble comprehensive population data sets in a regular chronological sequence. The time span of the sources roughly covers the period from the mid-1440s to the late 1480s; thus in some cases the earliest preserved Ottoman *defter*s only come more than one century after the Ottoman conquest of the area.

In spite of that this paper will present the assembled population statistics from the extant sources and will subsequently offer an interpretation and possible estimate of Bulgaria's population totals in the fifteenth century. This is achieved by supplementing regions or groups of taxpayers, which must have been present in the fifteenth century but for one reason or another were excluded from the taxation registers. Generally speaking, it is probably safe to state that the fifteenth-century Ottoman registers barely represent half of the population of Bulgaria at the time. For instance, there is virtually no extant source from this period for the entire northeastern part of the country. Thus important sub-provinces (*sancaks*) in Ottoman Rumelia such as Silistra remain unrepresented in the population statistics of the fifteenth century. The same is true for the western parts, such as the sub-province of Kjustendil (Ott. Köstendil *sancağı*), in which masses of Christians must have resided. Despite its importance, this sub-province is missing completely in the extant sources of the time. Other notable "blank spots" in the western zone are the regions of

[52] There could be registers that still remain "hidden" in the archives, because of improper cataloguing, or others that belong to private collections. For instance, there is a chance that a register from the 1450s which covers parts of Bulgaria survived in Halil İnalcık's private archive, since in an encyclopedia article published in 1986 he provided exact population figures for the town of Filibe in this period. Halil İnalcık, "Bulgaria" in *EI*^{2}, unfortunately without the benefit of a reference to the source of this information. In private conversations with Prof. İnalcık I had the opportunity to raise the question on multiple occasions, but despite the kindness he showed in searching his private archives for this source, for the time being it could not be revealed. Hopefully when İnalcık's archive is properly catalogued and fully operational at the HICOS at Bilkent University this register might be rediscovered for scholarly use.

Berkofça, Breznik, İvranya and Samako, where a large number of Christians must also have lived. Even those regions which are present in the extant sources are far from being completely covered in the registers and whole parts of them are sometimes missing, because the documents were torn apart and pages were subsequently lost. Moreover, as already mentioned, it appears that the large synoptic *cizye* registers published by Todorov and Barkan cannot be used as a means of compensating for the missing parts of the Christian population in Ottoman Bulgaria. Precise and time consuming cross-checks of these *cizye* records with extant *tahrir* registers from various parts of the Balkans showed that the fiscal unit used in these *cizye defter*s does not match a single family or a household as is the case with the *tahrir*s. Therefore, for the time being these sources can only be regarded as a reflection of the distribution of fiscal units over the entire Balkans, with limited potential for demographic studies. Logically, the number and density of *cizye hane* in a given region somewhat reflect the actual demographic situation in a specific place, the larger the number of fiscal units the more real individuals residing in the region, but it is impossible to extract more precise estimates of population totals.

In sum, the data from the extant *tahrir* registers for Bulgaria show that after the mid-fifteenth century some 50 thousand households of taxpayers can safely be identified in the Ottoman documents; of these households ¼ were Muslim and ¾ were Christian. Certainly these general figures for Bulgaria's population, as tentative and uncertain as they may be, convincingly demonstrate one fact – that significant changes took place in some of the regions of the country in the interim period between the conquest and the earliest preserved taxation registers. This fact is probably best observed in the southern zone, which is likely to have been badly ravaged by constant warfare waged by numerous contenders since the late twelfth century and in all probability it was also severely hit by the Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century. It is not possible to define the exact effect of the pillaging raids that were regularly carried out by the marcher lords of the Ottomans since the mid-fourteenth century, but certainly they must have had a negative effect on the local population. The unrest in the early fifteenth century, in the course of which the contenders for the Ottoman throne turned Thrace into a battle ground, in all probability had unfavorable consequences for the local Christians too. Finally, deportations of local Christians and Jews to the newly conquered Constantinople ordered by Mehmed II must have reduced even further the number of local residents, thus leaving a large unoccupied space for colonization by Anatolian Muslims.[53] This very process

[53] For instance, Mehmed II deported a group of 35 Jewish families from Philipoupolis/Filibe to the newly conquered Constantinople/Istanbul. Thus the Jewish community of Philippoupolis that survived in the town throughout the Middle Ages ceased to exist. Half a century later

was in fact the dramatic difference that took place in this territory if compared to the late medieval period, when Thrace and the Rhodopes were controlled either by the Byzantine Empire or by the Bulgarian kingdom. Masses of Muslim colonists settled in the southern zone after the Ottoman conquest, thus completely changing the ethno-religious picture of the area in favor of the Muslims. The empty Thracian planes must have appeared particularly appealing to the Turks from Asia Minor who arrived in the region and settled en masse in the post-conquest years.

Table 1. Bulgaria's population from the extant Ottoman registers (1440s–1480s)

Zone	*Muslim (household)*	*Christian (household)*	*Total (household)*
West	231	16,374	16,605
NC	2,316	18,413	20,729
NE	–	–	–
South	10,180	2,007	12,187
Total	12,727	36,794	49,521

The registers examined in this paper which cover the southern zone, dating from the 1460s to the 1480s,[54] portray a situation in which the Muslim taxpayers already have a sizable majority in the region. It is noticeable that the eastern part of Thrace is almost exclusively inhabited by Muslims, thus strongly suggesting that this part of the region was completely emptied of its autochthonous population prior to and during the Ottoman conquest. The sources testify that in the western part, i.e. the territory west of Plovdiv, a number of medieval settlements survived the turbulent years of the Ottoman conquest. These were large villages, situated primarily at the foot of the mountains, but also some laid on the open plain, while others were located deep in the valleys of the Rhodope Mountains. The Ottoman registers covering Upper Thrace are however incomplete, as a substantial part of the taxpayers who resided in *vakıf* lands are missing from these totals. Moreover, the town of Tatar Pazarcık and its villages are also absent from

Sephardic Jews arrived in the town via Thessaloniki, thus reestablishing a Jewish community in the town. Halil İnalcık, *The Survey of Istanbul, 1455. The Text, English Translation, Analysis of the Text, Documents* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2012), pp. 329–340; Halil Inalcık. "Istanbul" in *EI²*. Idem. "Jews in the Ottoman Economy and Finances 1450–1500," In Clifford Bosworth et al. (eds.) *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1989), p. 513.

[54] These are detailed *defters* BOA, MAD 35 (1466); BOA, MAD 342 (1466); BOA, MAD 549 (1466); BOA, TD 20 (1485); BOA, TD 26 (1489). The registers of Çirmen *sancağı* are analyzed in Çalık, Çirmen *Sancağı*.

the registers despite the fact that they undoubtedly existed at the time. The loss of this information is somewhat compensated, as can be seen below, by extrapolating data from the later period or whenever possible by using the information from a register dating to 1472, which enlists the taxpayers entitled to provide for upkeep of the light cavalry (*akıncı*).[55]

The extant sources demonstrate that Muslim colonists also appeared in the north-central zone.[56] According to Rumen Kovačev, who studied this region in detail, the administrative division of the sub-province of Nicopolis (Ott. Niğbolu sancağı) almost strictly followed the territorial division of the medieval Bulgarian state, ruled by Ivan Šišman (1371–1395). Thus one can witness signs of continuity in a territory that was added to the Ottoman realm as a result of several violent military campaigns.[57] Continuity is also attested by the Christian majority in the region, but nevertheless the fact the many Muslim settlers installed themselves in this territory is clearly perceivable, which indicates a substantial change. Even the capital of the medieval Bulgaria, the city of Tărnovo, already had a substantial Muslim community and essential Islamic infrastructure by the 1480s. Some of the largest pious foundations in the region of Nicopolis were already established and they supported a number of religious public buildings in the important towns in the region.

It is hard to pass a verisimilar judgment about the population losses during the Ottoman campaigns against medieval Bulgaria and the subsequent crusades, which ended on the battlefields near Nicopolis (1396) and Varna (1444) respectively.[58] Any military endeavor of this kind undoubtedly claims a cer-

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[55] Sofia, National Library PD 17/27 and OAK 94/73, two fragments of the same register, drawn up in December 1472. The introduction of the document, i.e. the order for its compilation and the way of registering the taxpayers and the raiders, was first published by Boris Nedkov, *Osmanoturska diplomatika i paleografia*, vol. 2 (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1972), pp. 175–7 and was recently analyzed by Heath Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), pp. 52–54. For detailed information about the register and its contents, see Mariya Kiprovska, *The Military Organization of the Akıncıs in Ottoman Rumelia*, M.A. Thesis, Bilkent University, 2004.

[56] Sofia, National Library Hk 12/9 (1483–1485) and Цг 20/1 (1483–1485), which are fragments of one register. These fragments are analyzed and translated into Bulgarian by Kovačev, *Opis na Nikopolskija sandžak*. Another fragment is OAK 45/29 (1479–1480), which was published by Todorov and Nedkov, *Turski izvori za bălgarskata istorija,* vol. 2, pp. 161–333.

[57] On the campaign of Çandarlı Ali Pasha against Bulgaria in 1388 see Machiel Kiel, "Mevlana Neşri and the Towns of Medieval Bulgaria. Historical and Topographical Notes", in *Studies in Ottoman history in honour of Professor V.L. Ménage*, edited by Colin Heywood and Colin Imber (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1994), pp. 165–187.

[58] Aziz Suryal Atiya, *The Crusade of Nicopolis* (London, Methuen & co., 1934); Halil İnalcık, "The Ottoman Turks and the Crusades, 1329–1451", in *A History of the Crusades*, edited by Kenneth M. Setton, vol. 6. *The Impact of the Crusades on Europe*, edited by Harry Hazard

tain human cost, but in this case it appears that whatever the negative impact of the warfare, by the 1480s it had been overcome. Hundreds of prosperous Christian villages in the north-central zone testify to the ability of the local Christian community to recreate and repopulate areas disrupted by warfare in the preceding years. Certainly scattered notes in the Ottoman registers attest to the inevitable destruction and depopulation of some settlements. This was, for instance, the case of a Christian village named Rupča in the district of Rahova (mod. Orjahovo), whose residents fled from the crusaders' army in 1444.[59] Nevertheless, such notes appear to be rather accidental and the residents of the north-central zone occupy more than 500 villages, many of which were large older medieval Christian settlements.

In contrast, the impact of recent warfare is clearly perceivable in the western zone, especially in the region of Vidin. On the one hand, the sub-province of Vidin also seems to be a reflection of medieval Bulgarian administrative tradition, inherited from the state ruled by Ivan Stracimir (1356–1396). On the other hand, the Ottoman sources clearly testify to a completely different demographic situation in which the negative impact of warfare on the local settlement network and the population totals is easily perceived. The earliest preserved Ottoman register of the *sancak* of Vidin dates to 1455, i.e. only a decade after the dramatic events of the crusade of Varna and about half a century after the Ottoman conquest of the region.[60] The general demographic situation portrays the region as almost entirely Christian, since Muslims in the area numbered around one thousand men, distributed in the urban centers. The majority was made up by the Christian rural population, which occupied more than 400 villages. A closer inspection of these settlements however reveals that more

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and Norman Zacour (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), pp. 250–253 and 270–275; Oskar Halecki, *The Crusade of Varna: A Discussion of Controversial Problems* (New York City: Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, 1943); Martin Chasin, "The Crusade of Varna", in Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 6. pp. 276–310; Colin Imber, *The Crusade of Varna, 1443–1445* (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), published the main narrative sources in English translation.

[59] The village was held as a *timar* by the local *kadi* of Rahova. After the residents abandoned the village, it remained uninhabited and the prebend was assigned to another individual, who took on the obligation to repopulate and revitalize the village. OAK 45/29, f. 37[b]; Todorov and Nedkov, *Turski izvori za bălgarskata istorija,* vol. 2, p. 245.

[60] İstanbul Belediye Kütüphanesi, MC. O90 (1455). This source is published in Bulgarian translation by Bojanić-Lukać, *Vidin i Vidinskiyat sandžak*, pp. 57–90, and analyzed and commented on at length by Vera Mutafčieva, "Vidin i vidinsko prez XV-XVI vek", in Bojanić-Lukać, *Vidin i Vidinskijat sandžak*, pp. 15–52. Two more fifteenth-century summary registers of the region are extant in the Istanbul archive – BOA, MAD 18 (1468–1469), Sofia OAK 265/27 (1477), and BOA, MAD 1 (1483–1484).

than ¼ of them had only five households or even fewer.[61] Altogether, about 80% of the settlements in the region of Vidin in the 1450s were villages with a population of up to twenty households. These circumstances undoubtedly bear witness to a terribly disrupted demographic situation that in all probability can be attributed to the military conflict of the preceding decade. The predominant part of the *timar*s in the region consisted of the incomes derived from one or two villages. About half of the Ottoman cavalrymen relied on revenue collected from a single village. It is apparent that this reflects an earlier situation in which larger inhabited villages could have sustained the Ottoman *timar*-holders, since it is quite clear that hardly any *sipahi* could have afforded to fully equip himself and operate effectively with the Ottoman army relying on the insignificant revenue derived from five or six households in a single village. It is also noteworthy that almost all villages which had a population between 50 and 200 households belonged to the *hass* of the then *sancakbeyi* of Vidin.[62] This fact suggests that the settlements that managed to avoid destruction were gathered for the prebend of the governor, while cavalrymen of lesser importance received the revenue from the deprived villages.

Despite the evidence suggesting considerable destruction, the region of Vidin was far from being depopulated. On the contrary, more than 16 thousand households were recorded in the Ottoman census of 1455. One can presume that some of the local residents managed to avoid registration, while others temporarily moved to safer neighboring regions, only to return in later years. In any case, later Ottoman registers show a drastic jump in population in the region, which indicates that in all probability many of the scattered residents of the region of Vidin returned to their homeland in the subsequent years or that Christian settlers from other parts of the Balkans came and revived the deprived villages in the northwestern part of Ottoman Bulgaria.

The last set of extant fifteenth-century Ottoman *defters* examined in this article cover fragmentary some of the remaining parts of the western zone, namely the regions of Sofia, İznebol/Znelpolje, and Nevrokob. These are different fragments from a seemingly larger registration carried out in the second half of the 1440s. Recently, the different pieces were published by İnalcık, Radušev, and Altuğ, who argued that the fragments actually once constituted a single

[61] Mutafcheiva, "Vidin i vidinsko", pp. 30–31.

[62] A certain İsa Bey is noted in the register as the current *sancakbeyi* of Vidin. This may well have been Evrensoğlu İsa Bey, the youngest son of Gazi Evrenos, or less likely İshakoğlu İsa Bey from Skopje. Cf. Lowry-Erünsal, *The Evrenos Dynasty of Yenice Vardar*, pp. 8–14, on the first generation of descendants of Gazi Evrenos. For recent summary of İshakoğlu İsa Bey's career, see Enes Pelidija and Feridun Emecen, "İsa Bey", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfi* İslâm *Ansiklopedisi,* vol. 22, pp. 475–476.

register, which they named "the summary register of Paşa Livası from 1445".[63] As scattered and incomplete the information in these registers may be, they do not bare the traces of recent destruction, as attested by the census of Vidin. Clearly many parts of the entire western zone are missing and the population statistics extracted from these records are far from accurate, but one can fairly safely assume that in the mid-fifteenth century the Muslim presence in this part of the country was insignificant. Certainly there were Muslim military and administrative personnel who remained out of the extant records, but in general the Christians constituted an overwhelming majority in the region.

It is not an easy task to account for the actual impact of the Ottoman conquest of the region, which took place some sixty years earlier, but the data in the registers points to a stable settlement network which lacks any visible signs of sudden drastic demographic changes. The Crusade of 1443 is known to have caused destruction in the region, for instance the city of Sofia was burned out, but I was unable to detect in the sources any significant signs of major demographic changes that came as a consequence of the winter war. On the contrary, the settlement network appears to have been stable, composed of large Christian villages which undoubtedly predate the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans.

It was already mentioned that despite providing particularly valuable information about the taxpayers in Bulgaria during the fifteenth century, the extant registers cover neither the entire territory that focuses the interest of this paper, nor do they list the entire population of the regions that were included in them. Thus making conclusions solely on the ground of the existing sources, one cannot provide a realistic demographic picture of Bulgaria in the period from the 1440s to the 1480s and will probably only be able to account for about one half of it. Therefore, in the section below I offer my hypothetical amendments to the existing demographic data, which must provide a more realistic estimate of Bulgaria's fifteenth-century population totals. This was achieved in a relative simple fashion. I reexamined all statistical information on a district (*kaza*) basis and considered the potential amendments that need to be undertaken in order to achieve a more accurate picture. For instance, some regions, such as parts of the southern zone, lacked information on the population that resided on the lands of the pious foundations. The list of *vak*ıfs and their possessions as attested in the later registers were carefully examined and those which undoubtedly existed in the period of question were selected. Their statistical information was extrapolated and population figures were added to the data assembled from the fifteenth century registers. In other instances, missing information for some territories could have been recreated on the basis of a different type of source. In the case of the town of Tatar

[63] İnalcık, Radushev, Altuğ, *1445 Tarihli Paşa Livâsı* İcmal *Defteri*, xv–xvii. Those covering different parts of Bulgaria are as follows: BOA, MAD 525; Sofia, D 707; Sofia, OAK 52/59.

Pazarcık and some of its surrounding villages, this became possible thanks to an extant *ak*ıncı register, which itself has certain severe limitations when used for demographic purposes. There are different cases like the region of Sofia or Vidin, which despite being supplemented with the extrapolated results for the *vak*ıfs in region still might be missing some portion of its population. On this occasion a clear preference was given to the existing genuine and controllable data, although in the case of Sofia in particular it appears to offer population figures lower than the actual situation of the mid-fifteenth century. Finally, for some districts that completely lack extant registers and information on the taxpayers, estimates of population totals were directly extrapolated from the statistical information from 1530, which is presented below. The estimates achieved in this manner are far from precise and have no pretensions to great accuracy, but the amendments which were made are essential. Without them the demographic picture of fifteenth-century Bulgaria would have been half empty.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, the entire population of Ottoman Bulgaria must have ranged between 550,000 and 600,000 inhabitants. Almost exactly 1/4 of the population in the country was Muslim, the remaining majority of 3/4 consisted of local Christians – Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbians, Vlahs, etc. The overall density of 5.4 inhabitants per sq. km appears much lower than the average for the Balkans at the time (~ 9–10 inhabitants per sq. km). This fact alone once more serves to illustrate that on the eve of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and in the course of the subsequent years the eastern parts of the Balkans were more sparsely inhabited in comparison to the central and western parts of the peninsula. This is also demonstrated by the greater concentration of *cizye hane* in these regions when compared to the eastern areas, as was rightfully pointed out by Todorov.[64] In the context of Bulgaria, yet again the western parts seem to have generally had a larger population than the eastern ones. This to a great extent must have also predetermined the challenge that the Ottomans faced during their conquering march. While the narrative sources are silent about any major military endeavor in Thrace and attribute its conquest to semi-independent marcher lords, the parts of Danubian Bulgaria were only taken after campaigns headed by the sultan or the grand vizier. Only further systematic studies of all extant Ottoman registers from the fifteenth and early sixteenth century would be able to shed more light on the precise demographics prior to and after the Ottoman conquest of the region and account for the human cost claimed by the unrest and warfare there. Collecting additional data on neighboring regions will allow researchers to track substantial population fluctuations and especially migration within the peninsula.

[64] Todorov, "Za demografskoto săstojanie", 210–214.

Table 2. – Estimates of population totals (1440s–1480s)

Zone	*District*	*Muslim*	*Christian*	*Total*
W	Berkofça	800	12500	13300
W	Breznik	0	2500	2500
W	Vidin	930	33570	34500
W	İvranya	200	25500	25700
W	İznebol	0	11635	11635
W	Menlik	800	16500	17300
W	Nevrekob	225	9410	9635
W	Samako	2500	16000	18500
W	Sofia	2600	31205	33805
W	Köstendil	5500	70000	75500
NC	İvraca	325	15605	15930
NC	Lofça	890	16645	17535
NC	Niğbolu	9935	50790	60725
NC	Tırnovi	4050	28585	32635
NC	Çernovi	1525	15210	16735
NC	Şumnu	880	2830	3710
NE	Aydos	2500	4000	6500
NE	Ahıyolu	4000	10000	14000
NE	Varna	7500	4000	11500
NE	Karınobası	4000	500	4500
NE	Prevadi	5000	4000	9000
NE	Silistre	10000	3500	13500
S	Akça Kızanlık	3030	45	3075
S	Eski Zağra	14005	865	14870
S	Yeni Zağra	5105	80	5185
S	Kızıl Ağaç	13345	3475	16820
S	Tatar Pazarcık	2000	3000	5000
S	Filibe	18420	16590	35010
S	Hasköy	15545	780	16325
S	Yanbolu	500	5000	5500
	Total	136,110	414,320	550,430

THE POPULATION OF BULGARIA IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

The earliest date at which the entire territory of Bulgaria is covered by a systematic Ottoman tax register is 1530, when the administration of Sultan Süleyman I (1520–1566) produced a number of large summary (*icmâl*) registers, thus covering most of the empire.[65] For this point in history one can estimate with relative accuracy the entire taxable population of Bulgaria; therefore it is of crucial importance for this study, which extends to the end of the seventeenth century. According to the data contained in the register from 1530, the entire population of Bulgaria at this time numbered roughly 1,100,000 individuals. Christians had an overwhelming majority over the Muslims and constituted 74% of the entire population.[66] The ratio between Muslims and Christians seems to have been largely preserved and similarly to the fifteenth century the Muslim constituted about 1/3 of the entire population.

Table 3. Estimates of population totals in 1530

Zone	*Muslim*	*Christian*	*Total*	*p/km²*
West	39,000	498,000	537,000	19.9
NC	60,000	221,000	281,000	9.2
NE	73,000	37,000	110,000	6.9
South	120,000	62,000	182,000	4.8
Total	292,000	817,000	1,110,000	10.2

Taken as a whole, the data accords well with what historical demographers have published concerning the rest of the Balkans and Europe. At that time, the entire Balkan Peninsula must have had a population of about 5.5 million; thus

[65] Many of these registers have been published or will be published in the near future in facsimile and summary translation by the General Directorate of the state archives in Turkey. Bulgaria features in several of these volumes (BOA, TD 167 & TD 370), published as *370 Numaralı Muhâsebe-i Vilâyet-i Rûm-ili Defteri (937/1530)*, vol. 1 (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, 2001), *370 Numaralı Muhâsebe-i Vilâyet-i Rûm-ili Defteri (937/1530)*, vol. 2 (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, 2002), *167 Numaralı Muhâsebe-i Vilâyet-i Rûm-ili Defteri (937/1530)*, vol. 1 (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, 2003). Herein these documents will be referred to as "the register from 1530".

[66] The total number of Muslims must be slightly increased, because it does not include members of the *askeri* class, who were tax-exempt.

its density approximated to 10.7 inhabitants per square km.[67] The population figures for Bulgaria are similar to those of Early Modern Portugal (1.2 m) and Belgium (1.3 m), while its density resembles countries like the Scotland (10.1 p/km^2) and Ireland (9.5 p/km^2) of the time, whose geography and environment is also somewhat comparable to Bulgaria. In the interim 60 to 80 years the total population of Bulgaria increased dramatically and almost doubled in number. While this was undoubtedly a period with a high growth rate throughout Europe as a whole, the rapid increase of the population in Bulgaria must be also attributed to migration by both Muslims from Asia Minor and Christians from western parts of the Balkans.

What makes the detailed population information from 1530 particularly important is the fact that it also offers the possibility for analysis on a smaller, regional scale. Thus one immediately faces the diverse demographic picture of Bulgaria and the uneven distribution of its inhabitants. The most loosely inhabited zone is the southern one (with a density of 4.8 p/km^2), which encompasses roughly Upper Thrace and the northern part of the Rhodopes and the Strandža ranges. The density of Christians who inhabited the area in 1530 was 1.6 individuals per sq. km, which is extremely low, comparable only to the Scandinavia of the time. Even European Russia, known for being a sparsely populated region, had almost twice as many residents per sq. km in this period.[68] In light of the fact that all evidence demonstrates that the southern zone was very sparsely populated, it is not surprising that Muslim colonists from Asia Minor and Tatars from Crimea came and settled there en masse. The abundance of pastures and arable land must have attracted settlers who moved to the region of their own free will, while others, according to the Ottoman chronicles, were deported there upon the explicit orders of the Ottoman rulers. Overall, the southern zone exemplifies perfectly Barkan's thesis.[69] Indeed, the region seems to have been virtually revived by the influx of Muslim settlers, who occupied most of

[67] McEvedy and Jones, *Atlas of World Population*, pp. 110–114. An excellent recent summary of the bibliography on the European population to date is presented by Paolo Malanima, "The Economic Consequences of the Black Death", in Elio Lo Cascio, ed., *L'impatto della "Peste Antonina"* (Bari: Edipuglia, 2012), pp. 312–315, esp. Table 1 on p. 314, which provides detailed population data and a bibliography.

[68] Malanima, "The Economic Consequences of the Black Death", p. 314.

[69] A quarter of a century ago, Machiel Kiel published a seminal article on the urban development of Bulgaria in the Ottoman period. In this monograph-sized article, he argues on the basis of a study of the architectural and demographic development of a number of cities in Bulgaria that both Barkan and Todorov's views are valid in a restricted number of cases. However, applying only one of the theses to the whole of Bulgaria is, according to Kiel, misleading. Machiel Kiel, "Urban Development in Bulgaria in the Turkish Period: the Place of Turkish Architecture in the Process", *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 4:2 (1989): 79–129. The article was indeed published as a book in Turkish translation, idem. *Bulgar-*

the open plane. Except for several dozen settlements that survived in the lowlands, the majority of the Christian villages were located either at the foot of the mountains or deeper into them. The Muslim colonists not only resettled and practically recreated the old urban centers, but also established several prominent towns in the region.[70]

The picture seen in Thrace and the Rhodopes is to a great extent mirrored in the northeastern zone, which was also colonized by Muslims, while Christians largely remained in residence in the Black Sea coastal towns and the settlements at the foot of the Balkan range. It appears that similarities in the pre-Ottoman conditions in the two zones are also reflected in the post-conquest period. Muslim settlers appeared in the NE region as a result of deportations organized by the central power, like the *kızılbaş* Turcomans deported by Selim I (1512–1520) from Eastern Anatolia to the Deliorman region, or as part of a larger process of gradual, constant uncontrolled migration.[71] Likewise, in the NE zone the Muslims constituted a large majority, while Christians were loosely distributed in the region (2.3 p/km^2). Furthermore, the ratio between the Muslim and Christian inhabitants of the southern and northeastern zones is strikingly comparable. In both cases, Christians constituted about half of the Muslim residents in these regions. It is difficult to propose any reliable statistics about the rate of Islamization in 1530, but is appears that the greater majority of the Muslim residents in NE and S zones must have been native Turks or Tatars.[72]

While the demographic picture in the first two zones examined above fits well into Barkan's view, the north-central zone (NC) can be seen as a "transition" toward the opposing thesis forwarded by Todorov. In the NC zone continuity clearly prevailed, but it went alongside modification and transformation. Thus, data from 1530 portrays this section of Danubian Bulgaria as a far more densely inhabited region than its southern counterpart. Moreover, more than

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istan'da Osmanlı Dönemi Kentsel Gelişimi ve Mimari Anıtlar (Ankara: T. C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2000).

[70] New towns in the region, established by Muslim colonists for instance are: Tatar Pazarcık (mod. Pazardžik), Karlova (mod. Karlovo), Kızanlık (mod. Kazanlăk), Çırpan (mod. Čirpan), Yenice-i Zağra (mod. Nova Zagora), Hasköy (mod. Haskovo), Harmalı (mod. Harmanli), Cisr-i Mustafa Paşa (mod. Svilengrad), Karın Abad (mod. Karnobat), etc.

[71] The demographic processes in the region are analyzed by Nikolay Antov, "Imperial Expansion, Colonization, and Conversion to Islam in the Islamic World's 'Wilds West': the Formation of the Muslim Community in Ottoman Deliorman (N. E. Bulgaria), 15th–16th cc." (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2011).

[72] The rate of Islamization can only be tracked on the basis of detailed tax registers which list individual tax payers by name. However, providing even nearly accurate figures for the actual numbers of religious converts, which naturally fluctuate in time, for such a large territory is no easy task and must fall beyond the scope of the present research.

220 thousand Christians, mostly Bulgarians, resided in the relatively intact settlement network. The Christian population had an overwhelming majority, but Muslims (60 000), mostly Anatolian settlers, had a sensitive presence in this zone. Lying along the Danube, the natural northern border of Ottoman Rumelia, the area must have seemed attractive not only to those whose livelihood was war, but also to many sedentary urban and rural dwellers. Muslim residents settled in all towns and cities in the zone, including Nicopolis, the largest city in Bulgaria at this time, but also created new settlements, including several towns such as Plevne (mod. Pleven), founded and dominated by the prominent Mihaloğlu dynasty of raider commanders, and several others established a little later, such as Hezargrad (mod. Razgrad), Eski Cuma' (mod. Tărgovište), and Osman pazarı (mod. Omurtag).[73]

If there is a zone in Bulgaria in the 1530s that to a great extent reflects the demography of medieval Bulgaria this is undoubtedly the western one. By all means its development fully accords with the views forwarded by Todorov. The western zone not only housed half of the entire population of the Ottoman Bulgaria of the day, but its population density of 19.9 p/km^2 is fully comparable to that of the then Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The Muslim settlers in the zone represent a negligibly small portion in comparison to the half-a-million Christian residents in the western part of the country. It is difficult to say with any precision how many people lived in the same area during the late Middle Ages, but data from the fifteenth-century registers and the census from1530 strongly suggest that the region passed through the troublesome time of the Ottoman conquest and the crusades of 1396 and 1443–1444 relatively intact. It is plausible that the western regions attracted a great number of the residents of Upper Thrace, which turned into a dangerous and unpleasant place to live after the late twelfth century.

The western zone once again demonstrates the importance of studying demographic processes from both local and larger regional perspectives. If a historian is tempted to make conclusions on the basis of what can be observed as demographic situation in the other three zones, he will inevitably fall in a trap set by the scarcity of information. Conversely, if general conclusions are based solely on data from the western zone, then the results can be dangerously misleading. Only when the multiple pieces of one entity are brought together can one understand, for instance, the real weight of the western zone in the demographic history of Ottoman Bulgaria. This zone, which constitutes a quarter of the territory examined in this study, houses more than half of its population. Moreover, the Christians who inhabited the western zone not only

[73] Machiel Kiel authored short articles in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* about each of these towns, which include the outlines of their development and also a rich bibliography.

constituted the larger portion of the entire population of Ottoman Bulgaria at that time, but the surplus of their demographic growth would also spread to the other zones in the course of the sixteenth century. The high planes and mountainous relief of the western part of Bulgaria might have seemed a promising and safe place when political unrest ravaged the open lowlands, but at the turn of the sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth century, when a climatic change caused a drop in average temperatures, the higher altitude proved to be unfavorable. As a result, the demographic trend of the region shifted, thus once more influencing the trends in the other zones. This fact alone points to the importance of studying demographic data in the longest possible sequence, which will minimize the chance of drastic errors and offers a safer ground for generalizing conclusions.

Putting the 1530 data of Bulgaria into a larger Balkan context, one faces a very logical arrangement. The territory of Bulgaria occupies roughly one fifth of the Balkans and its population in the 1530s again constitutes about one fifth of the entire Balkan population at the time.[74] Two registers dating to 1553–1554 housed in Topkapı Palace archive in Istanbul provide a good opportunity to attempt another rough estimate of the Balkan population in the mid-sixteenth century. These documents also allow a large-scale comparison of the fiscal units (*hane*) on which the *tahrir* and *cizye* registers are based, thus establishing the thesis that *cizye hane*s, at least in this period, can be identified relatively safely as households. Multiplied by the coefficient of 5, as historians do with households from *tahrir* registers, one can estimate the Christian population of any region.

The documents in question were prepared by the Ottoman central administration because due to the discrepancies between the *hijri* and solar calendars the collection of *cizye* had fallen behind. The central accounting office ordered the renewal of the registers and appointed registrars and scribes who would go to the provinces and carry out the new registrations. The documents not only list the officials appointed to perform the registrations and the regiments to which they belonged, but also offer information about the amount of poll tax collected in each individual region (*cizye vilâyeti*).[75] Thus, if the regions that cover the territory of Bulgaria in these *tevzi cizye* registers are taken out of

[74] Barkan estimated the population of the Balkans in 1520–1530 at 5.2 million. If Istanbul is also added, then the total population amounts to 5.5–5.6 million. These estimates became the standard core data for all demographic modeling since then. Barkan, "Tarihî Demografi", 11, idem, "Essai sur les données statistiques", 20.

[75] Digital copies of these documents are available and more easily accessible at the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi. TSMA.d. 10081 0001 & TSMA.d. 3411 0001. See Appendix 4 for complete data on the Balkans. A comparison of the data form these sources with the registers published by Barkan and Todorov, dating from the late 1480s and early 1490s, appears very promising for further elaboration on the methods of collection of *cizye* by the Ottoman

the whole, it appears that in the 1550s the Ottoman administration collected about 128,000 poll tax *hane*. When this data is compared to the available data from the *tahrir* register from 1530 (163,447 Christian households), it becomes apparent that what is included in the *cizye* register is far lower than the actual number of Christian households in the country. However, as Barkan warned many years ago, these figures lack the Christian tax-payers who resided in lands that belonged to pious foundations (*vakıf*), because they were registered separately.

Table 4. – Christian population of Bulgaria, 1530 and 1550s

Type	*Hane*	*Chr. popul. (x 5)*
Tahrir from 1530	163,447	817,233
Cizye from the 1550s	128,062	640,310
Vakıf households in BG (1550s–70s)	40,184	200,920
Cizye &Vakıf (1550s)	168,246	841,230

Fortunately, in this case the database assembled for Bulgaria for this article allows a relatively easy check that determines how many Christians resided in *vakıf* lands and were therefore excluded from the *cizye* register for the 1550s. In the table above I chose to use data from registers of pious foundations that date from the mid-1550s up until the early 1570s, because it is chronologically closer to the *cizye* register and also accounts for the growth in the interim years. Moreover, in the period after 1530, several large pious foundations were established in Bulgaria, which must also be taken into account. Thus, the *evkaf* registers reveal that about 40 thousand Christian households resided in the estates of the foundations, which constitutes exactly 20% of the entire Christian population of Bulgaria in 1570. Therefore, in order that we come to more realistic figures for the Christian taxpayers, the 128 thousand *hane* from the *cizye* register from the 1550s must be supplemented by the 40 thousand households belonging to the pious foundations. The total of 168 thousand households, or a Christian population of about 840 thousand falls very well between the estimates of Christian totals for the 1530 and the 1570s (817,233 and 1,000,470 respectively).

These estimates demonstrate that when the number of taxpayers of the pious foundations are added to the data of the *cizye* register, it provides very accurate data that can be matched with this from the *tahrir* records. In this respect,

administration. Barkan, "894 (1488/1489) Yılı Cizyesi", Todorov–Velkov, *Situation démographique*, Todorov, "Za demografskoto săstojanie".

since both registers provided very similar information regarding the Christian taxpayers, it is self-explanatory that the fiscal units used in both registers are identical – a simple household. Once this fact is established, one can venture to suggest general population figures for the entire Balkans on the basis of the *cizye* register from the 1550s.[76] The data of the *cizye* payers contained in the document is supplemented by a presumed 15% of taxpayers from the pious foundations, which are missing from the register.[77] The estimates of Muslim and Jewish taxpayers are based on Barkan's totals from 1520–1530, which are mechanically increased by 10%, the overall estimated growth of the Christian population in the interim years. Furthermore, the raw figures of Barkan of Istanbul's population are also supplemented, but the share of Christians registered in the *cizye* register is subtracted from Barkan's totals.[78]

Table 5. – Estimated population of the Balkans in the 1550s

	Hane	*Population*	*p/km²*
Muslim	300,000	1,500,000	2.8
Christian	912,000	4,500,000	8.9
Jewish	4,500	22,500	0.04
Total	*1,216,500*	*6,022,500*	*11.8*

The estimates above bespeak of the fact that the population of the Balkans was growing quickly in the sixteenth century, reaching 6 million in the middle of the century. The trend seems to have generally continued, since demographic historians suggest that the peninsula's inhabitants numbered 7 million at the turn of the century.

The general figures for the Balkan population allow the demographic trend of Bulgaria to be placed into a larger framework. Similar to the whole of Europe and the Balkans in this period, the inhabitants of Bulgaria were also increasing at a very rapid pace. To a great extent this was due to the large natural growth of local Muslims and Christians, but it also appears that the population influx, a result of continuing migration from Asia Minor, must be taken into account too. Between 1530 and 1570 the total inhabitants of Bulgaria increased by 47%,

[76] The same was attempted for the late fifteenth century in the pioneering effort by Todorov, but he did not include in his estimates the portion of taxpayers that belonged to pious foundations and was therefore criticized by Barkan.

[77] The portion of *vakıf* taxpayers in Bulgaria in 1550s amounts to 20%, but the territory was particularly rich in pious foundations. Therefore, for the rest of the Balkans a smaller percentage must be applied -15, or perhaps even smaller.

[78] Cf. Appendix 4 for individual regions.

reaching roughly 1.5 million individuals. It is immediately noticeable, however, that the growth was not distributed equally among the four zones of the country. While the population in three of the zones increased at a rate ranging between 55 and 65%, the western zone witnessed a slight growth of only 7.8%. Moreover, the ratio between Muslims and Christians, which in 1530 was 2:1, also changed in favor of the Christian population, as in the NE the Christians doubled in number in the interim years. This change can be explained by high natural growth, but also by the influx of settlers as a result of internal migration. In seems very plausible that the higher density of the Christian inhabitants in the western regions of Bulgaria pushed its surplus towards the eastern regions, such as Thrace and Dobrudža, which still remained sparsely inhabited, and therefore there was abundance of lands that could be reclaimed by these Christian migrants. In all probability it cannot be a coincidence that the first steady Christian quarters in the hitherto entirely Muslim towns such as Tatar Pazarcık and Eski Zağra in Upper Thrace appeared precisely in the same period.[79]

Table 6. – Population of Ottoman Bulgaria, 1570s–1610s

	1570s				1580s–1590s			
Zone	*Mus*	*Chr*	*Total*	*Density*	*Mus*	*Chr*	*Total*	*Density*
West	56,500	522,000	578,500	21.4	56,500	535,000	591,500	21.9
NC	157,000	290,000	447,000	14.7	230,000	458,000	688,000	22.6
NE	100,500	81,000	181,500	11.3	105,000	86,000	191,000	11.9
South	177,000	107,000	284,000	7.5	210,000	118,000	328,000	8.6
BG	491,000	1,000,000	1,491,000	13.7	601,500	1,197,000	1,798,500	16.3

	1610s			
Zone	*Mus*	*Chr*	*Total*	*Density*
West	43,000	405,000	448,000	16.6
NC	162,000	324,000	486,000	15.9
NE	85,000	63,000	148,000	9.3
South	150,000	116,000	265,000	7.0
BG	440,000	908,000	1,348,000	12.2

Likewise, the rapid growth of the Muslims in the NC zone, who almost tripled in the interim years, must also be largely attributed to considerable natural growth combined with an intensive influx of Muslim Turks from Asia Minor.

[79] Bojkov, *Tatar Pazardžik*, pp. 61–66; idem, "Balkan City or Ottoman City", pp. 73–74.

This zone, for one reason or another, must have appeared particularly attractive to the settlers, because its exploding population expansion continued even in the 1580s and 1590s, when the trend for the rest of the country showed signs of a slowing growth rate. Yet again, except for the natural growth, this process must be the result of continuous external and internal migration towards this region. The local toponymy in Danubian Bulgaria suggests far greater migrational dynamics than are accounted for in the traditional historiography. Village names such as Büyük Filibelüler, Küçük Filibelüler, or Zağralılar, listed in the registers of the region of Hezargrad in this period,[80] clearly attest to the intensive internal migration. The same process is also clearly reflected in the general population estimates for the entire country, which reached a total of nearly 1.8 million – the highest point in the time span of the present study. The NC zone, in which the population density reached 22.6 inhabitants per sq. km, turned into the most densely populated area of the Ottoman Bulgaria of the day, which makes it comparable to many western European regions of that time. Speaking in absolute numbers, the NC zone also exceeded the western zone, but the highest number of Christians still remained in the western part of the country.

The rapid population growth of Bulgaria was disrupted in the late 1590s, when the first climatic extremes triggered a demographic trend which seemingly dominated during the entire Little Ice Age period.[81] Moreover, the political events at the turn of the sixteenth century were especially unfavorable to Danubian Bulgaria, which was raided and pillaged by the troops of the Wallachian ruler Michael the Brave several times in the period following 1594, and especially after 1596. The actual demographic consequences of the numerous Wallachian raids are unknown, but the contemporary sources speak of an intentional campaign of killing and carrying the population away en masse. The consequences of the so called First Tărnovo uprising (1598) are also shrouded in obscurity, but Bulgarian historians are inclined to see them as an exodus of

[80] Machiel Kiel, "H'razgrad – Hezargrad – Razgrad. The Vicissitudes of a Turkish Town in Bulgaria (Historical, Demographical Economic and Art Historical Notes)," *Turcica* 21–23 (1991): 536.

[81] The climatic history of Bulgaria is a developing field which is expected to provide more definitive answers in the future. Recent research on the climatic changes, based on the dendrochronologic analysis of samples from *Pinus heldreichii* taken in the Pirin mountains, demonstrates that the first two decades of the seventeenth century were extremely cold, the average annual temperatures dropping every year until the mid-1620s, when the trend shifted towards a decade of relatively moderate temperatures. The data is part of an ongoing research project of the Dendrology Studies Laboratory of the University of Forestry in Sofia.
http://dendrologybg.com/dendrochron/index.htm (last accessed 20 January 2015).

about 50 000 Bulgarian families, who migrated to Wallachia.[82] While there is little doubt that all figures for these dramatic events are more than tentative and only future, unbiased research can offer more realistic numbers, it is certain that the combination of worsening climatic conditions, pillage raids, and social and political unrest in Danubian Bulgaria had a lasting negative effect upon the demographic trends of the region. Thus, logically the estimates of population totals, based on the last *tahrir* registrations from the early seventeenth century, show a significant drop in inhabitants in Bulgaria. After the great population boom in the second half of the sixteenth century, the population figures of the country returned to levels closer to those of the 1550s. Moreover, the total number of inhabitants continued to decline in number rapidly in the course of the cold first three decades of the seventeenth century.

THE POPULATION OF BULGARIA IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The general demographic trend in the seventeenth-century Ottoman Balkans has been debated by historians in the past, who even disagree about whether the population actually drops or grows. Bruce McGowen forwarded a hypothesis that a dramatic, nearly catastrophic decrease in population took place in the Balkans in the course of the seventeenth century.[83] Maria Todorova criticized the methodology McGowan used to estimate the population totals of the Balkan lands and offered a diametrically opposite opinion on the demographic processes. Based on the sources used by McGowen, Todorova argued that if the total Balkan population in the seventeenth century declined at all, this must have been a small drop, thus completely overruling the idea of a "demographic catastrophe".[84] The demographic database for the present article demonstrates that in all probability the trend lies somewhere between what McGowen and Todorova assert. Based on data assembled for the territory of Bulgaria in the seventeenth century, it could be argued that the entire population indeed declined in number, toward the end of the century reaching levels lower than those seen in the 1530s. Therefore, the fact that there was a demographic crisis

[82] Cvetana Georgieva and Nikolaj Genčev, *Istoriya na Bălgarija XV–XIX vek* (Sofia: Anubis, 1999), pp. 248–251, Elena Grozdanova and Yoana Spisarevska, "'Da si zemjata otnemem.' Săprotivitelni izjavi i dviženija na bălgarite", in *Istorija na bălgarite. Tom II – Kăsno srednovekovije i Văzraždane*, edited by Georgi Markov (Sofia: Trud, 2004), pp. 296–313.

[83] Bruce McGowan, *Economic Life in Ottoman Europe: Taxation, Trade, and Struggle for Land, 1600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[84] Maria Todorova, "Was There a Demographic Crisis in the Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth Century?" Études *Balkaniques* 2 (1988): 55–63.

in seventeenth-century Bulgaria is beyond question. Moreover, given the similarities between the demographic trends of Bulgaria and these of the entire Balkans in the previous century, one can quite confidently state that the trend for the entire peninsula must have been somewhat comparable. Thus, overruling the existence of a demographic crisis of the seventeenth-century Balkans, as Todorova did, is certainly incorrect, but by no means does the decrease in population seem to have had as catastrophic a character as claimed by McGowen. The lower figures in McGowen's work, which seemingly indicate a drastic shrinkage of the population, come from his use of the problematic registers for the collection of the extraordinary levies registers, in his case in their most condensed version. As stated above, the *avariz* registers, for one reason or another, tend to include fewer people than the registers for collecting the *cizye* tax of the non-Muslim taxpayers.[85] These huge discrepancies between the two types of sources are perceivable at all levels and locations. Unfortunately, even the series of detailed *avariz* registers from the 1640s that cover most of Danubian Bulgaria and some southern parts of the country and that at a first glance appear very promising for demographic studies, proved, when examined in detail and compared with the *cizye* registers, to be highly misleading for demographic purposes. Therefore, even these excellent detailed records must be handled with the utmost care and their data must certainly be checked against other contemporary sources.[86] Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to infer that a study on population estimates entirely and exclusively based on the *avariz* registers of any kind would inevitably account for a demographic catastrophe that took place in the seventeenth century.[87]

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[85] I addressed the same issue before some of the leading scholars in the field of Ottoman studies at the 11th International Congress of the Economic and Social History of Turkey, held in Ankara in 2008, "Notes on the reliability of detailed *avariz* and *cizye* records for the demographic history of the Ottoman Empire". Süleyman Demirci has published a number of studies examining the *avarizhane* registers of several Anatolian provinces. He argues that the seemingly inexplicable fluctuations of taxable units reflect the bargain between the central administration and local communities and have no relation to the actual population changes: Süleyman Demirci, "Demography and History: the Value of the *Avârizhâne* Registers for Demographic Research: A Case Study of the Ottoman Sub-Provinces of Konya, Kayseri and Niğde, c. 1620s–1700", *Turcica* 38 (2006): 181–211; idem. *The Functioning of Ottoman Avâriz Taxation: An Aspect of the Relationship Between Centre and Periphery: A Case Study of the Province of Karaman, 1621–1700* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2009).

[86] These are, for instance, the *mufassal avariz* register of Silistra from 1641–1642 (BOA, KK 2591), two volumes, covering Niğbolu sub-province from 1643–1644 (BOA, TD 771 & TD 775), a detailed register that covers part of Upper Thrace from 1658–1659 (BOA, KK 2628), etc.

[87] In addition to McGowen's work, Turan Gökçe, "XVII. Yüzyılda Filibe Şehrinin Demografik Gelişimi", in *Uluslararası Osmanlı ve Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk-Bulgar* İlişkileri *Sempozyumu*

It was indicated above that during the sixteenth century the fiscal units (*hane*) of the *cizye* registers constituted roughly one simple household. There are many reasons to believe that the same was largely true for the greater part of the seventeenth century, prior the *cizye* reform of 1691.[88] Comparing the data on *hane* density from the last *tahrir* registration (1614) and *cizye* registers from the 1610s to the 1640s in the southern zone, one finds very similar results – 0.6 hane/km^2 in the *tahrir* against 0.7 hane/km^2 in the *cizye* registers. The results for the NE zone (0.8 vs. 0.9 hane/km^2) are likewise very similar and therefore fully comparable. In light of this almost perfect concurrence of the spread of the taxable units, it is likely that the Ottoman administration continued its practice from the previous century according to which the *cizye* tax was distributed on the basis of households. In all probability, that was true predominantly for the rural areas, because some towns and cities showed inexplicable discrepancies, which indicates that there must have been special arrangements applied on a local, perhaps urban, level.[89]

The data on the Christian population in seventeenth-century Ottoman Bulgaria indicate that there was an overall decline in taxpayers. The process was gradual and continued throughout the entire century. Thus, after the 1670s, the total population of the country shrank to under one million inhabitants.

Table 7. – Estimated population of Bulgaria in the seventeenth century

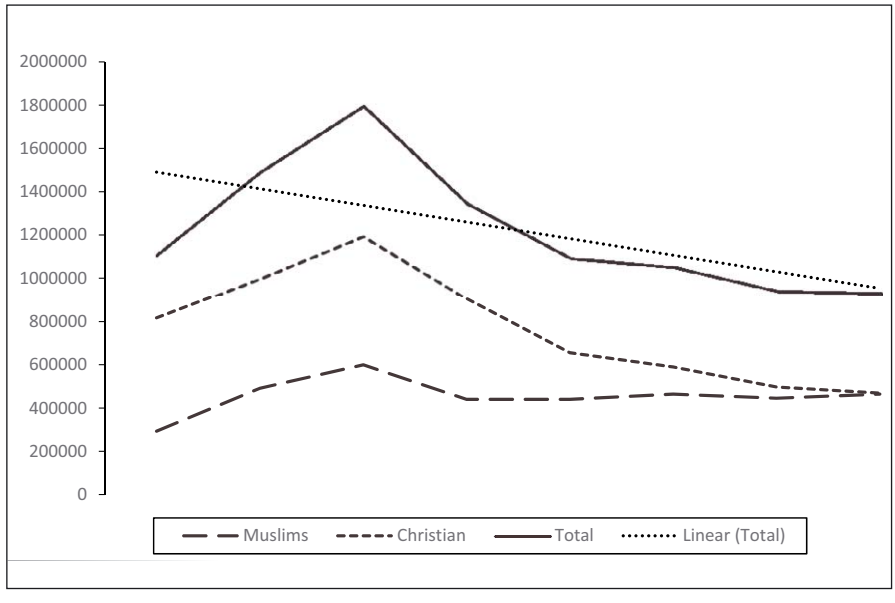
Date	*Chr. Hane*	*Christ.*	*Est. Mus*	*Total*	*Density*
1610s–1640s	132,000	660,000	440,000	1,100,000	9.9
1640s–1660s	117,000	585,000	464,000	1,049,000	9.5
1670s	99,000	495,000	445,000	940,000	8.5
1680s	94,000	470,000	464,000	934,000	8.4

Results displayed in the table and the graph above indicate quite clearly that after reaching its peak in the 1580s–1590s, the population of Bulgaria began to shrink. The general drop in population was uneven however. The decrease in Christians was faster than that in Muslims, which must probably be attribut-

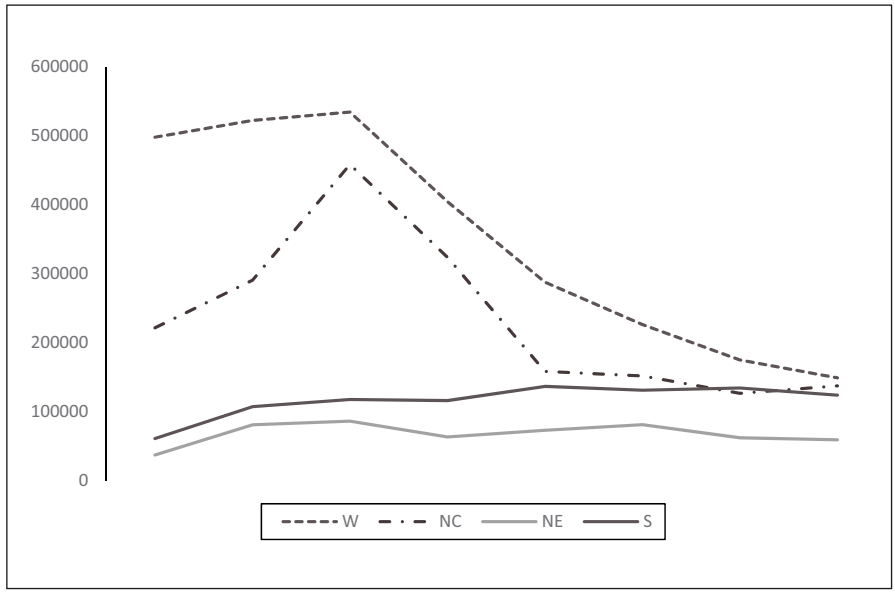
11–13 Mayıs 2005. Bildiriler Kitabı, edited by Meral Bayrak et al. (Eskişehir: Osmangazi Üniversitesi, 2005), pp. 49–64 is another good example of a study that accounts for the "demographic catastrophe" of Plovdiv's population in the seventeenth century on the basis of the data from the *avariz* registers. Needless to say, when compared to the series of *cizye* registers it becomes obvious that such a catastrophe never took place.

[88] For the reform, see Kiel, "Remarks on the Administration of the Poll Tax", 84–85 and passim, McGowan, *Economic Life*, pp. 80–83.

[89] For further argumentation and examples of local variations, see Bojkov, *Tatar Pazardžik*, pp. 87–94.



Graph 1. – Estimated population totals for Bulgaria (1530–1680s)



Graph 2. – Zonal trends of the population of Bulgaria (1530–1680s)

ed to the intensified Islamization in the course of the seventeenth century.[90] Moreover, like in the preceding century, when some regions grew at the expense of others, in the course of the seventeenth century it was the southern region, especially the flat plane of Thrace, that attracted settlers from the rest of the country. Thus, while the population of the western zone shriveled, in the southern zone it remained seemingly quite stable. This stability, however, is illusive, because it was not due to larger growth, but to the constant influx of population predominantly from the western parts of the country.

Table 8. – Christian Population of Ottoman Bulgaria in the seventeenth century

	1610s–1640s		1640s–1660s	
Zone	*Hane*	*Inhab.*	*Hane*	*Inhab.*
West	58,000	290,000	45,000	225,000
NC	32,000	160,000	30,000	150,000
NE	15,000	75,000	16,000	80,000
South	27,000	135,000	26,000	130,000
BG	132,000	660,000	117,000	585,000

	1670s		1680s	
Zone	*Hane*	*Inhab.*	*Hane*	*Inhab.*
West	35,000	175,000	30,000	150,000
NC	25,000	125,000	27,000	135,000
NE	12,000	60,000	12,000	60,000
South	27,000	135,000	25,000	125,000
BG	99,000	495,000	94,000	470,000

The *cizye* registers of the western zone contain multiple notes left by the Ottoman officials sanctioning the reduction of the amount of *cizye* tax due to the flight of local population. This process is particularly visible in the regions located at a higher average altitude, where the worsening climatic conditions must have caused regular harvest failures, thus forcing the local residents to abandon their settlements and move to Thrace in search of a better livelihood or even survival. My observations on the settlements on the territory of Upper Thrace show that a large number of hitherto Muslim villages were settled by Christians in the course of the seventeenth century. Whenever local historians

[90] Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans:* Kisve Bahası *Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670–1730* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 28–63.

tracked the roots of their ancestors, it often turned out that these are predominantly migrants from the higher planes of the western part of Bulgaria. Except for relocation, conversion to Islam was also perceived as means of survival in these regions during the troubled period of global cooling. The heavier burden of taxation on the Christians must at some point have become unbearable for many, since the entire seventeenth century is a period with a much greater Islamization rate, especially in high altitude regions.[91] In result of this process, which certainly began earlier, entire districts of Bulgaria converted almost entirely to Islam in the course of the seventeenth century.[92]

The dynamic internal migration during the seventeenth century lead to a more proportionate distribution of the Christian population in Ottoman Bulgaria. Thus, toward the 1680s three of the zones in the country had about 120–150 thousand Christian residents. Only the NE zone remained more sparsely inhabited, which must be attributed to its geography and also to the cooler climate in comparison to Thrace. Taken as a whole, the book by Elena Grozdanova, which is the sole monographic study on the population of Bulgaria in the seventeenth century to date, falls short of understanding most of the demographic dynamics in the country.[93] Grozdanova's sample of registers is much smaller; hence the author missed some of the crucial shortcomings of the sources. In this respect, despite the many other merits of her publication, the comparison of the population estimates she presents and the database compiled for the present paper shows that Grozdanova's work tends to offer much smaller numbers for most regions. This fact alone seriously calls into question the reliability of her estimates and the validity of her general conclusions.[94]

The sample for the period after the *cizye* reform of 1691 remain incomplete, because I was unable to find extant registers for several important provinces. It is quite possible that these registers might "show up" in the archives

[91] Raduev, *Pomacite*, pp. 385–392.

[92] Machiel Kiel, "La diffusion de l'Islam dans les campagnes bulgares à l'époque ottomane (XV^{e}–XIX^{e} s.): colonisation et conversion", *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 66:1 (1992): 39–53 and the expanded version of this paper, focusing on some of the historical myths about the process of Islamization in Bulgaria, idem, "Razprostranenie na islyama v bălgarskoto selo prez osmanskata epoha (XV–XVIII v.): kolonizacija i islamizacija", in *Musyulmanskata kultura po bălgarskite zemi*, vol. 2, edited by Rosica Gradeva and Svetlana Ivanova (Sofia: IMIR, 1998), pp. 56–125.

[93] Grozdanova, *Bălgarskata narodnost prez XVII vek*.

[94] For the present study, it is not necessary to further develop this point. This can be done in a separate publication closely comparing the sets of information region by region. Nevertheless, this point is intended to demonstrate the huge responsibility carried by historians who offer population estimates. As I noted in the introductory part of this article, one must either accept and trust the statistical information presented by a certain author or simply return to the primary sources and basically do the same research in order to check the figures.

in Istanbul or Sofia in a deeper and luckier search, but for the moment they are inaccessible to me. My inability to compile a full set of registers from the post-reform period, which according to prescriptions were to be executed in more canonical fashion, i.e. including all adult male non-Muslims, forced me to abandon the idea of presenting population estimates on the basis of these sources. Moreover, in spite of the administrative prescriptions and a seemingly more organized impression, the post-1691 *cizye* are not without their problems either. Careful comparison of a series of such records shows significant discrepancies, which indicates a serious potential problem when they are used for historical demography. Besides, for the moment it is very difficult, if not completely impossible, to define a meaningful multiplayer that will turn their data into inhabitants. It rests on future studies involving larger collections of such registers for different parts of the Balkans, to lead us to a better understanding of the nature of these sources and better use of their huge potential for estimates of population totals. Hence, in the hope that my research may be beneficial to those who will study these sources in the future, I condensed the information of the post-1691 *cizye* registers into a database that offers results in Ottoman fiscal units.[95] My inability to fully comprehend the logic behind the compilation of the post-reform *cizye*s and the lack of a full set of documents covering of the country forced me to leave the analyses of the post-1691 data to scholars who are more skilled than I.

CONCLUSION

The Ottoman conquest and the subsequent rule of the Balkans is a historical period that bears the uneasy ideological and emotional burden of the greater portion of scholarly writings to date. The lack of a systematic collective academic effort in studying this period of the Balkan past more profoundly opened a wide room for politically or nationally motivated inspirations which shaped the perception of a number of generations. It seems that it falls to our modernity to propose a more conciliatory approach towards this period that is exclusively based on unbiased, genuine academic research free as possible from any ideological burden. The contributions in this volume will hopefully make a modest step in this direction, demonstrating once more the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation.

The chief question of this paper about the human cost of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans can only be answered satisfactorily when a series of

[95] See Appemdix 3. Table 8. – Incomplete information on some of Bulgaria's *cizye vilâyets* in the 1690s (many after the reform of 1691).

studies presenting relatively accurate demographic information about different localities in the late medieval Balkans become available. This information can be compared with the extant Ottoman tax registers and other primary sources, on the basis of which one can offer a better-argued assessment on the destructiveness of the conquest. Evidently, this must be a collective effort, since the research requires a high degree of proficiency in different fields, something rarely encountered in an individual scholar. Moreover, reconstructing the entire mosaic of late medieval and Ottoman-era demographic history, fitting together pieces of different sizes, is an intricate task. We need to take numerous systematic steps in this direction before the entire picture is completed.

My efforts in studying the demographic history of Ottoman Bulgaria in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries aimed at offering one such small piece that will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the demographic processes in the Balkans as a whole. There are several major conclusions that can be put forward on the basis of the analysis of Bulgaria's population estimates. It is of vital importance that one examines the region of study in as much local detail as possible while juxtaposing the statistical information thus obtained with as wide a region as possible. This, to a great extent, reduces the chance of errors and compensates for the shortcomings of the sources which must be used in the longest possible series.

The study on the population of Bulgaria also demonstrates that some established or recent concepts do pass inspection. In spite of the increasing number of respected scholars who claim that Ottoman tax registers are practically useless for demographic studies, the database assembled for the territory of present-day Bulgaria demonstrates that, when carefully used by qualified researchers, these sources have enormous potential and the quality of their information for the general population estimates is by no means inferior to most of the western European sources. Certainly, the Ottoman tax registers are not without their problems when used for demographic history, but their limitations can be overcome if scholars handle them with the necessary degree of precision and in accordance with certain basic principles. Furthermore, the statistics for Bulgaria's population demonstrated far greater internal mobility than scholarship is generally inclined to perceive. The ideas of Marxist historiography that portrayed the taxpayers as attached to land were overcome long ago, but hardly any study suggests mobility on the scale witnessed in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Bulgaria. Above all, the present study on Bulgaria's population confirms and supplements what is already known about the demographic trends of the Ottoman Empire. Similar to other parts of the empire, the sixteenth century was a period of rapid demographic growth for Bulgaria too. We have no general figures for the first years of the sixteenth century, but it is fairly safe to suggest

that in the course of the century, as in many other locations, the population of Bulgaria doubled in number. At the turn of the sixteenth century the trend clearly shifted downward. Leaving aside the population losses caused by the unrest in the 1590s, the entire population of Bulgaria clearly declined throughout the seventeenth century. The pace of this decline can hardly be labeled a "catastrophe", but it was evidently a full-scale demographic crisis.

To claim that the demographic trends observed in Bulgaria can be representative of the entire Balkans must be incorrect. Nevertheless, a number of similarities between what is known about general population estimates of the Balkans and Bulgaria suggest that the processes examined in Bulgaria can be seen as indicative of the rest of the Balkans. After all, the statistical information in this article covers 1/5 of the territory of the peninsula, which is hardly a negligible part of it.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF SOURCES

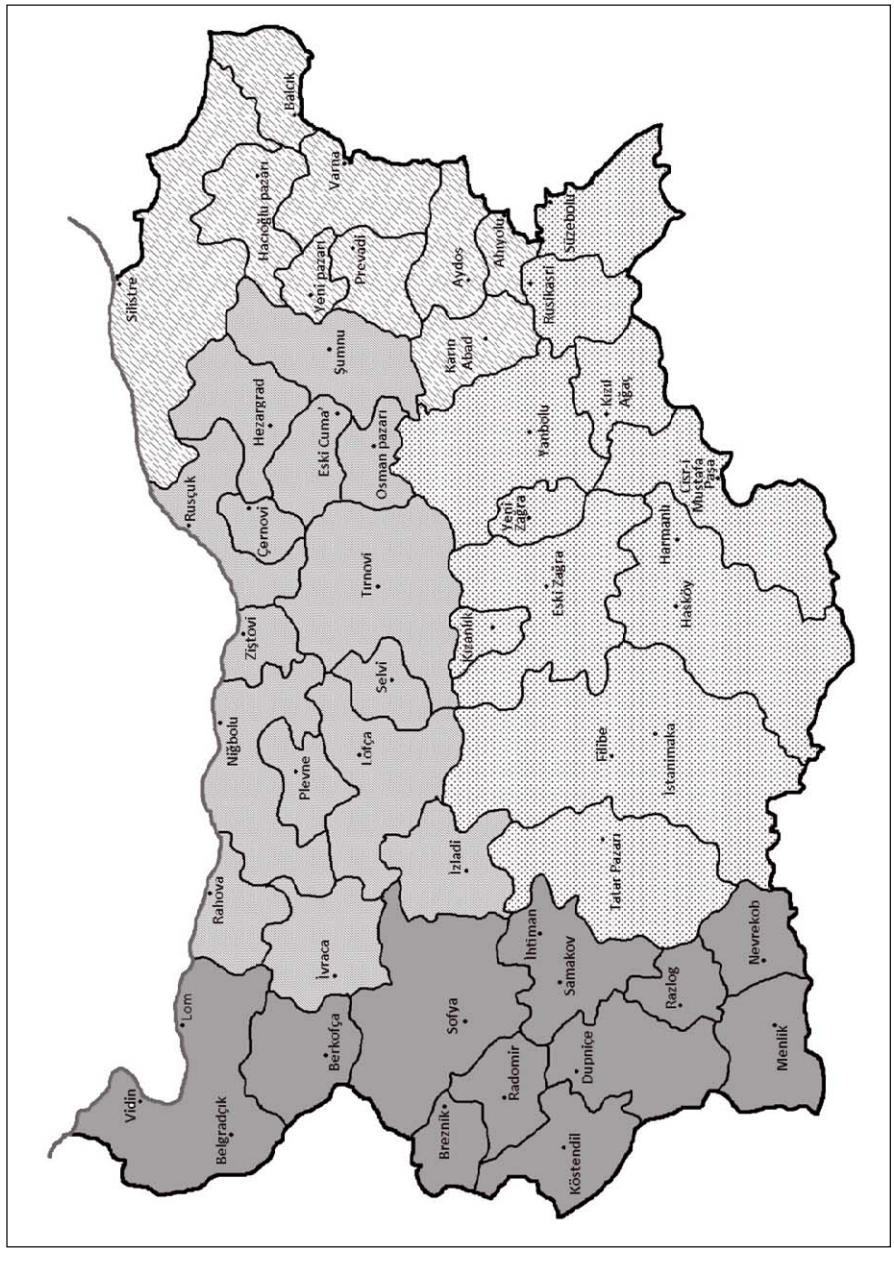
Date	Type	Call no.
1444–1445	*tahrir icmal*	MAD 525
1444–1445	*tahrir icmal*	D 707
1444–1445	*tahrir icmal*	OAK 52/59
1455	*tahrir icmal*	İBK MC. O 90
1466	*tahrir mufassal*	MAD 35
1466	*tahrir mufassal*	MAD 342
1466	*tahrir mufassal*	MAD 549
1468–1469	*tahrir icmal*	MAD 18
1472	*ak*ıncı	Пд 17/27
1472	*akıncı*	OAK 94/73
1477	*tahrir icmal*	OAK 265/27
1479–1480	*tahrir icmal*	OAK 45/29
1483–1484	*tahrir icmal*	MAD 1
1483–1485	*tahrir icmal*	Hk 12/9
1483–1485	*tahrir icmal*	Цг 20/1
1485	*tahrir mufassal*	TD 20
1489	*tahrir mufassal*	TD 26
1530	*tahrir icmal*	TD167
1530	*tahrir icmal*	TD370
1550–1551	*tahrir mufassal*	TD267
1550–1555	*tahrir mufassal*	TD416
1550–1555	*evkaf mufassal*	TD416
1550–1555	*tahrir mufassal*	TD498
1552–1553	*cizye tevzi*	TSMA.d. 10081 0001
1566–1567	*tahrir mufassal*	TD542
1569–1570	*tahrir mufassal*	TD483
1570	*tahrir mufassal*	TD492
1570	*tahrir mufassal*	TD494
1572–1573	*tahrir mufassal*	TD521
1579–1580	*evkaf mufassal*	TD713
1579–1580	*tahrir mufassal*	TD718
1595	*tahrir mufassal*	TD651
1596	*tahrir mufassal*	TD1001
1596	*evkaf mufassal*	TD470
1596	*tahrir mufassal*	TD539
1596	*tahrir mufassal*	TD566
1597–1598	*tahrir mufassal*	TD688
1604–1605	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1403
1606	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1343
1610	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1101
1611–1612	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1070
1611–1612	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 15246
1614	*tahrir mufassal*	TT 729
1614	*cizye ziyade*	Ф. 88A, a.e. 243
1614–1615	*cizye ziyade*	Ф. 119, a.e. 154
1614–1615	*cizye ziyade*	Ф. 79, a.e. 988
1616–1617	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 213A, a.e. 5
1616–1617	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф.213A, a.e. 6
1619–1619	*cizye icmal*	OAK 89/57
1621–1622	*cizye icmal*	Вн 24/32
1622–1622	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 15224
1622–1623	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 15219
1623–1625	*cizye icmal*	Бл. 3/5
1624	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 20A, a.e. 269
1624	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 73, a.e. 14
1625	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1466
1625	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1538
1625–1626	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 141A, a.e. 186
1625–1626	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 75A, a.e. 196
1626–1627	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 138, a.e. 65
1627	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1453
1628	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 6636
1628	*cizye icmal*	Од 14/23
1628–1629	*avariz icmal*	MAD 15211
1635	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 88, a.e. 50
1636	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 126, a.e. 4
1636–1637	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 181A, a.e. 99
1637–1638	*cizye zevaid voynuk*	Ф. 145A, a.e. 73
1638	*cizye muhasebe*	Кс 8/12
1638–1639	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 179, a.e. 185
1639	*cizye icmal*	OAK 89/57
1639	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 125, a.e. 30
1639	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 140A, a.e. 101
1639	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 159, a.e. 68
1639	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 181A, a.e. 102
1639	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 28A, a.e. 102
1639	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 29A, a.e. 120
1639–1640	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1903
1639–1640	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 25A, a.e. 81
1640	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 7433
1640	*cizye icmal*	Вд 124/4
1640	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 156A, a.e. 364

Date	Type	Call no.
1641–1642	*avariz icmal*	D.MKF 27465
1641–1642	*avariz icmal*	KK 2596
1641–1642	*avariz mufassal*	KK 2591
1642	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1422
1642	*cizye mufassal*	Kc 10/10
1642	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 119, a.e. 1739
1642	*cizye mufassal*	Ф. 162, a.e. 29
1642–1643	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 159A, a.e. 72
1642–1643	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 162A, a.e. 37
1642–1643	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 29, a.e. 930
1642–1643	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 73A, a.e. 23
1642–1643	*avariz mufassal*	TT 775
1642–1643	*avariz mufassal*	TT 771
1643	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 213A, a.e. 12
1643–1644	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1054
1643–1644	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 15096
1643–1644	*cizye muhasebe*	См 3/2
1643–1644	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 117A, a.e. 93
1644–1645	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 156, a.e. 370
1645–1646	*cizye muhasebe*	Сф 26/8
1645–1646	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 1A, a.e. 22382
1645–1646	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 29, a.e. 122
1646–1647	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 162A, a.e. 382
1647	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1431
1647–1648	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1219
1647–1648	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 162A, a.e. 75
1649	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1560
1649–1650	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 4866
1650	*cizye icmal*	MAD 1566
1650–1651	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15039
1650–1651	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15203
1651	*cizye icmal*	Пд 17/28
1651–1652	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15097
1652–1653	*cizye icmal*	MAD 1040
1654–1655	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15199
1654–1655	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 126A, a.e. 87
1654–1655	*cizye zevaid voynuk*	Ф. 162A, a.e. 401
1654–1655	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 72, a.e. 1
1655–1656	*cizye icmal*	MAD 1049
1655–1656	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15189
1655–1656	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15604
1656–1657	*cizye icmal*	R1, л. 286, док. II-29a.
1657	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 26A, a.e. 2131
1658–1659	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15198
1658–1659	*avariz mufassal*	KK 2628
1661	*cizye icmal*	MAD 1598
1661–1662	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 162, a.e. 42
1662–1663	*cizye icmal*	MAD 2937
1662–1663	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 117, a.e. 272
1663–1663	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 112, a.e. 627
1664–1665	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15057
1664–1665	*cizye ziyade*	OAK 127/7
1664–1665	*cizye muhasebe*	OAK 127/7
1664–1665	*cizye icmal*	Бл 2/1
1664–1665	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 165A, a.e. 115
1665	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 121A, a.e. 1172
1665–1666	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 137, a.e. 119
1666	*cizye icmal*	Сл. 6/22
1666	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 156A, a.e. 833
1666–1667	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15058
1667–1668	*cizye ziyade*	Ф. 88A, a.e. 274
1668	*cizye icmal*	MAD 5377
1668	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 162A, a.e. 644
1670	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 117A, a.e. 102
1670–1671	*cizye ziyade*	Ф. 139, a.e. 9
1670–1671	*cizye ziyade*	Ф. 88A, a.e. 274
1672–1673	*avariz icmal*	MAD 6619
1672–1673	*cizye ziyade*	Ф. 88A, a.e. 278
1673	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 165A, a.e. 15
1674	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3487
1676	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3653
1676–1677	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 137, a.e. 119
1676–1677	*cizye icmal*	Ф. 165A, a.e. 15
1677–1678	*cizye muhasebe*	Ф. 1A, a.e. 22589
1678–1679	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 15072
1678–1679	*cizye ziyade*	Ф. 116A, a.e. 39
1683–1684	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15202
1684–1685	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15102
1684–1685	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15206
1685–1685	*cizye mufassal*	Вн 31/4
1685–1686	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3621
1685–1686	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 7395
1686–1687	*avariz mufassal*	D.MKF 27581
1686–1687	*avariz icmal*	D.MKF 27614
1686–1687	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15161
1686–1687	*cizye ziyade*	Ф. 88A, a.e. 285

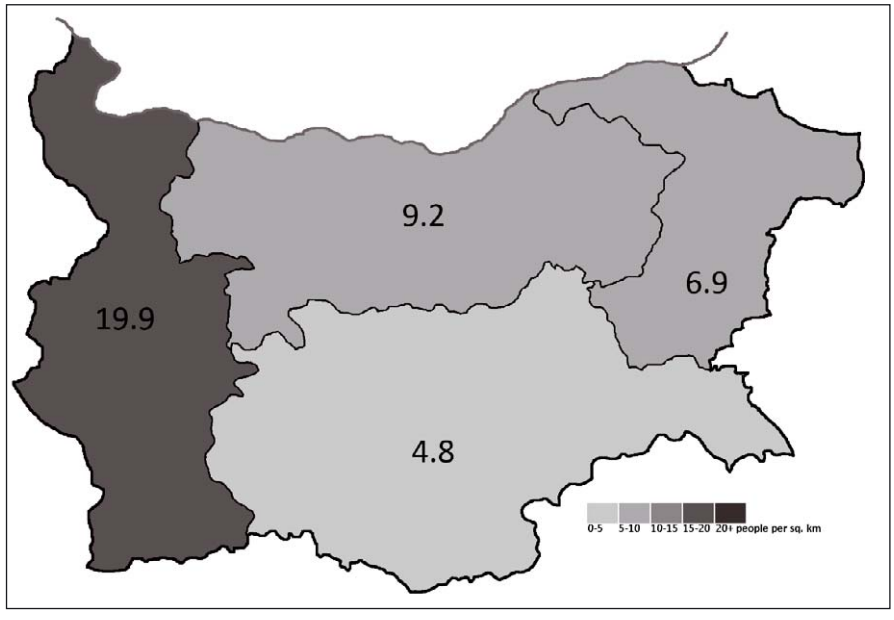
Date	Type	Call no.
1686–1687	*cizye ziyade*	Φ. 88A, a.e. 833
1687–1688	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15009
1687–1688	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15017
1687–1688	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15021
1687–1688	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15027
1687–1688	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15036
1687–1688	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15046
1687–1688	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15052
1687–1688	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15138
1687–1688	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15140
1687–1688	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15196
1688–1688	*cizye icmal*	MAD 14891
1688	*cizye icmal*	MAD 15141
1688	*cizye icmal*	Φ. 142, a.e. 55
1689–1690	*cizye icmal*	Φ. 128A, a.e. 20
1689–1690	*cizye icmal*	Φ. 162, a.e. 28
1690–1691	*cizye mufassal*	D.CMH 26636
1690–1691	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 2994
1690–1691	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3312
1690–1691	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3630
1690–1691	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 4023
1690–1692	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3506
1691	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1244
1691–1692	*cizye mufassal*	D.CMH 26652
1691–1692	*cizye mufassal*	D.CMH 26654
1691–1692	*cizye mufassal*	D.CMH 26657
1691–1692	*avariz mufassal*	KK 2740
1691–1692	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3492
1691–1692	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3801
1692	*cizye mufassal*	D.CMH 26651
1692–1693	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1203
1692–1693	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1291
1692–1693	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 15928
1692–1693	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3431
1692–1693	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3763
1693–1693	*cizye mufassal*	D.CMH 26659
1693	*cizye mufassal*	D.CMH 26661
1693–1694	*avariz icmal*	D.MKF 27722
1693–1694	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1301
1693–1694	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3673
1693–1695	*avariz icmal*	D.MKF 27724
1694	*cizye mufassal*	D.CMH 26668
1694	*cizye mufassal*	D.CMH 26680
1694–1695	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1275
1694–1695	*avariz mufassal*	MAD 2740
1695	*cizye mufassal*	D.CMH 26679
1695	*avariz mufassal*	MAD 3604
1695–1696	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3658
1696–1697	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1196
1696–1697	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 1273
1696–1697	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3460
1696–1697	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 6052
1696–1697	*cizye mufassal*	D.CMH 26692
1697–1698	*cizye mufassal*	MAD 3652
1698	*cizye mufassal*	D.CMH 26696

Some of the sources are published in various editions, such as Nikolay Todorov and Boris Nedkov, eds., *Izvori za bălgarskata istoriya. Turski izvori za bălgarskata istoriya, seriya XV–XVI*, vol. 2 (Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiya na Naukite, 1966); Dušanka Bojanić-Lukać, *Vidin i Vidinskiyat sandžak prez 15–16 vek: dokumenti ot arhivite na Tsarigrad i Ankara* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1975); Strashimir Dimitrov, Elena Grozdanova and Stefan Andreev, *Izvori za bălgarskata istoriya. Turski izvori za bălgarskata istoriya*, vol. 7 (Sofia: Bălgarska Akademiya na Naukite, 1986); Rumen Kovachev, *Opis na Nikopolskiya sandžak ot 80-te godini na XV vek* (Sofia: Narodna Biblioteka Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodiy, 1997); Elena Grozdanova, *Turski izvori za bălgarskata istoriya* (Sofia: Glavno Upravlenie na Arhivite, 2001); Halil İnalcık, Evgeni Radushev and Uğur Altuğ, transls. and eds., *1445 Tarihli Paşa Livâsı* İcmal *Defteri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2013)

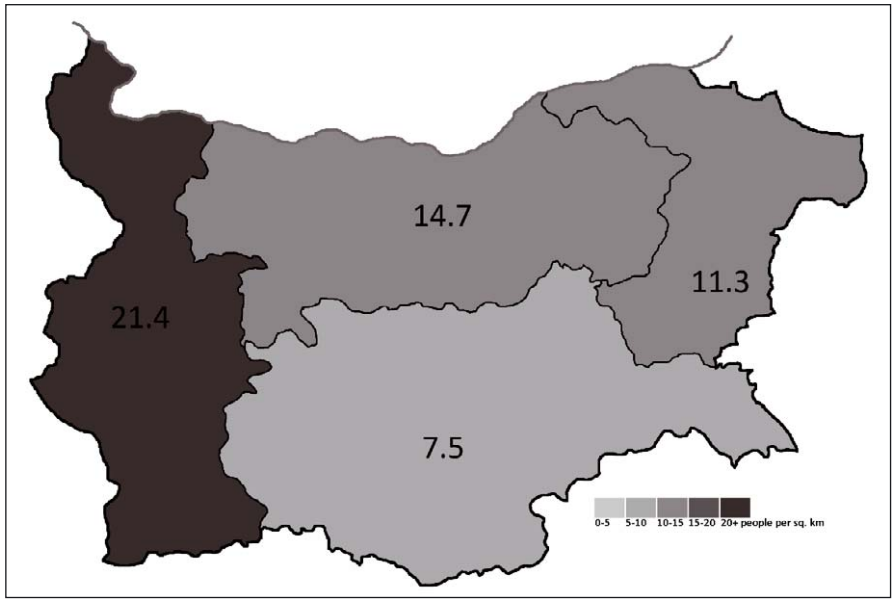
APPENDIX 2: POPULATION DENSITY MAPS



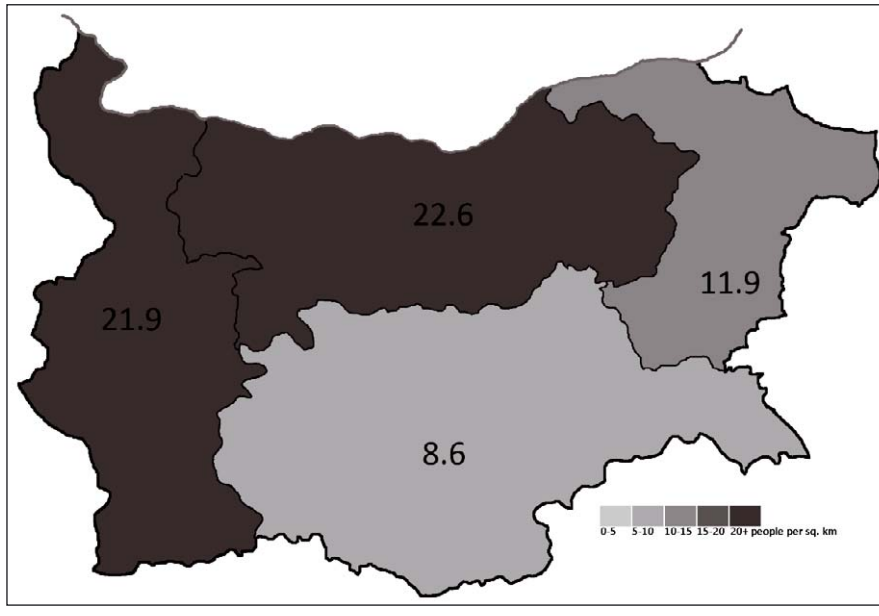
Map 1. Zonal division of Ottoman Bulgaria in this study



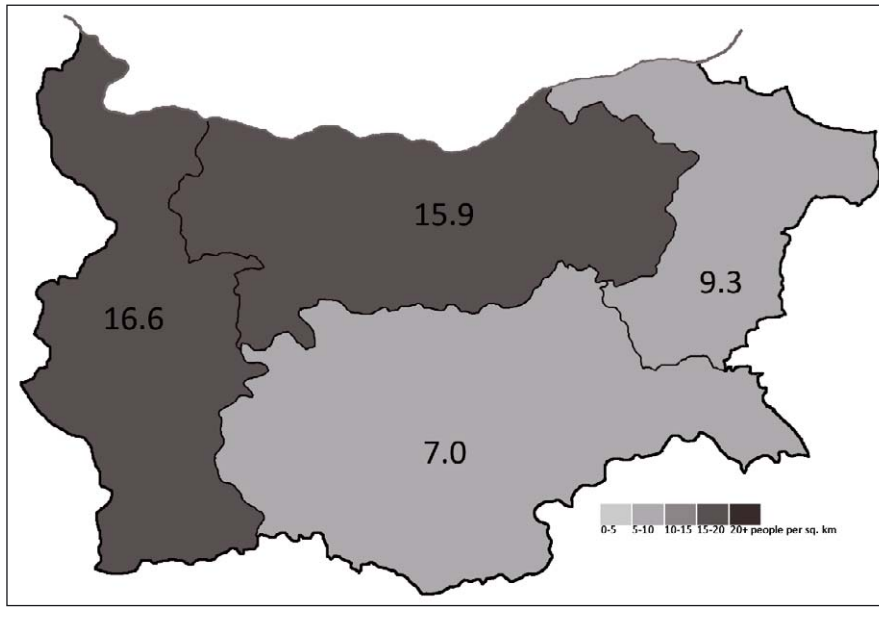
Map 2. Population density 1530



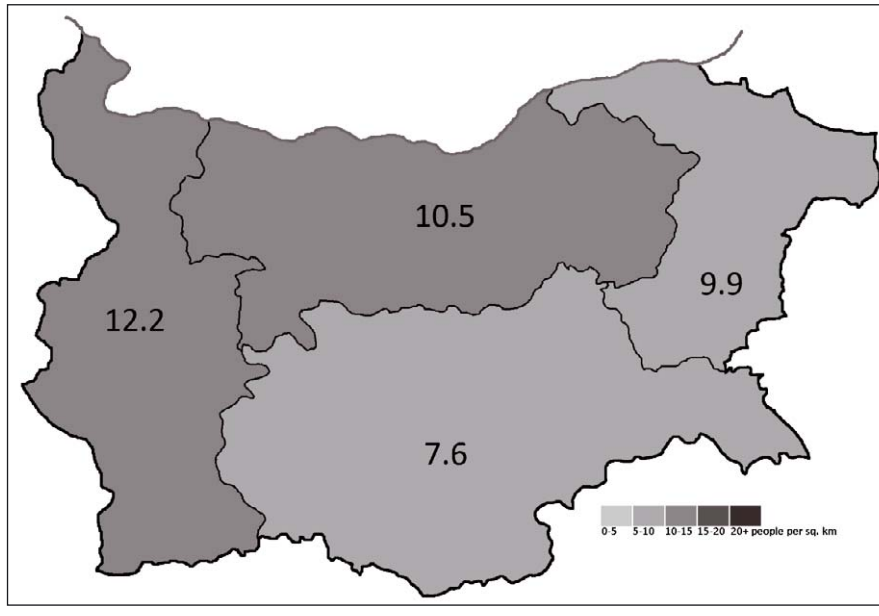
Map 3. Population density 1570s



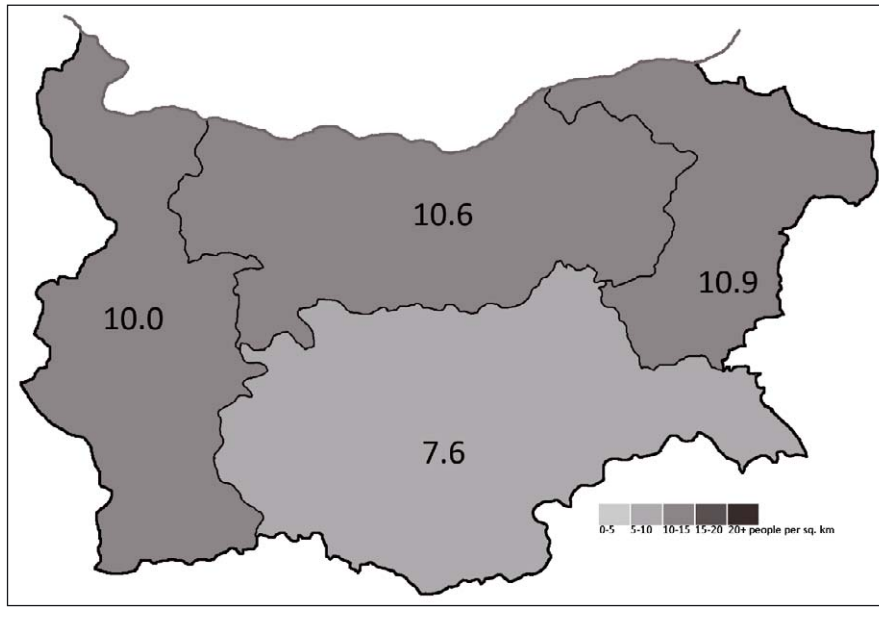
Map 4. Population density 1580s–1590s



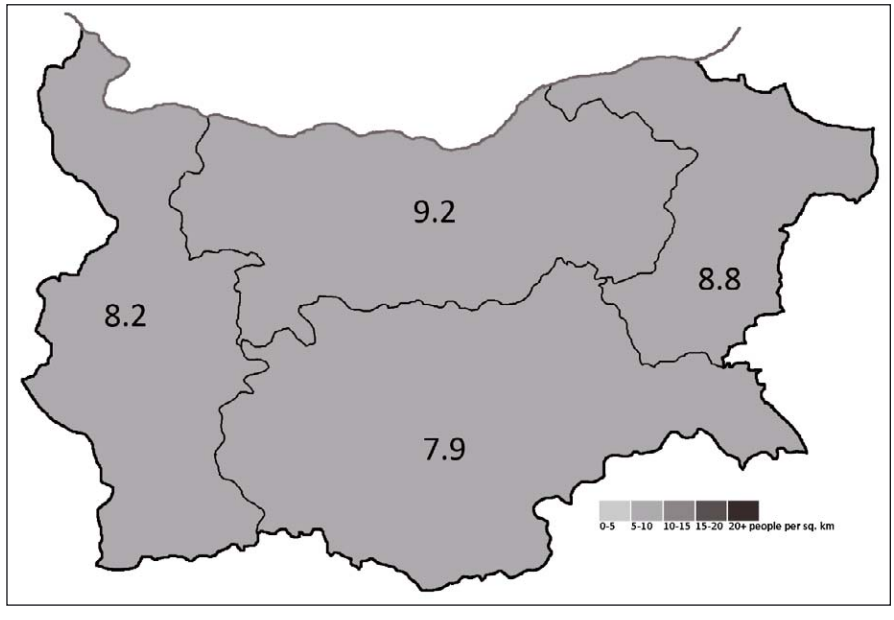
Map 5. Population density 1610s



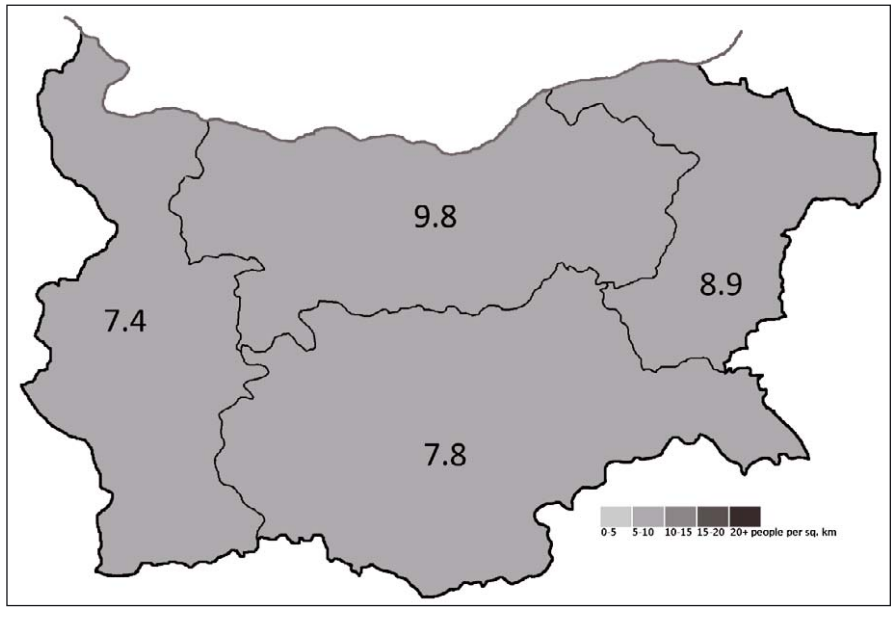
Map 6. Population density 1610s–1640s



Map 7. Population density 1640s–1660s



Map 8. Population density 1670s



Map 8. Population density 1680s

APPENDIX 3:

Table 1 – Population density of Bulgaria in the 16th c. (inhabitants per km²)

	1530			1570s		
Zone	*M*	*Chr*	*Total*	*M*	*Chr*	*Total*
West	1.4	18.5	19.9	2.1	19.3	21.4
NC	2.0	7.2	9.2	5.2	9.5	14.7
NE	4.5	2.3	6.9	6.3	5.0	11.3
South	3.2	1.6	4.8	4.7	2.8	7.5
BG	2.8	7.4	10.2	4.6	9.2	13.7

	1580s–1590s			1610s		
Zone	*M*	*Chr*	*Total*	*M*	*Chr*	*Total*
West	2.1	19.8	21.9	1.6	15.0	16.6
NC	7.5	15.0	22.6	5.3	10.6	15.9
NE	6.6	5.4	11.9	5.3	4.0	9.3
South	5.5	3.1	8.6	4.0	3.1	7.0
BG	5.4	10.8	16.3	4.1	8.2	12.2

Table 2 – Incomplete information about some of Bulgaria's *cizye vil*âyets in the 1690s (many after the reform from 1691)

*Vil*âyet	*Nefer*	*Vil*âyet	*Nefer*
West		NC	
Breznik	585	Eski Cuma'	290
Dupniçe	2997	Hezargrad	2756
İznebol	951	Hotaliç	761
İhtiman	353	İvraca	1204
Köstendil	1884	Lofça	4401
Petriç	819	Osman pazarı	1666
Polomiye	445	Plevne	4131
Razlog	901	Rahova	1263
Samako	4053	Ruşçuk	11796
Vidin	643	Tırnovi	9381
		Şumnu	1950
		Ziştovi	3538

Vilâyet	*Nefer*	*Vilâyet*	*Nefer*
South		NE	
Akça Kızanlık	2770	Balçık	2065
Çırpan	2248	Hacıoğlu pazarı	1012
Eski Zağra	2663	Misivri	822
Filibe	21532	Prevadi	3236
İslimiye	2447	Silistre	2363
Tatar pazarı	10968	Varna	1634
Yeni Zağra	2393	Yeni pazarı	1196

APPENDIX 4:
BALKANS IN THE CIZYE REGISTERS FROM 1553–1554

Cizye vilâyet	*Hane*	*Inhab.*	*Cizye vilâyet*	*Hane*	*Inhab.*
Ağrafa	4977	24885	Balyabadra	3632	18160
Ağrafa (*tetime-i*)	4484	22420	Belgrad-i Arnavud	4406	22030
Ağriboz	4807	24035	Belgrad-i Ungurus	3797	18985
Ahıyolu	6354	31770	Berkofça	7310	36550
Akçahisar	5229	26145	Bosna *(rüsüm-i eflâkan-i*)	4038	20190
Alacahisar	2419	12095	Bosna (*voynugan ve martolosan*)	844	4220
Alacahisar (*zevayid voynugan*)	1098	5490	Bosna (*baştine-i akıncıyan*)	1121	5605
Alasonya	4720	23600	Brevnik	4009	20045
Alasonya (*tetime-i*)	5011	25055	Brod	4059	20295
Angelikasri	5901	29505	Cibriler (eflâkan)	2621	13105
Argirikasri	5068	25340	Çitroz	2870	14350
Argirikasri (*tetime-i*)	4949	24745	Delvine	7122	35610
Arhos	5557	27785	Delvine (*tetime-i*)	5763	28815
Arnavud (*hasha-i*)	3042	15210	Depedelen	3119	15595
Asprapotam	4294	21470	Dibri	3728	18640
Atina	6616	33080	Dibri (*tetime-i*)	3595	17975
Avlonya	4472	22360	Dilpoçiçe?	4149	20745
Avrethisarı	6707	33535	Drama	5228	26140
Aya Mavra	3976	19880	Dukagin	2323	11615
Aydonat	2740	13700			

Cizye vilâyet	*Hane*	*Inhab.*
Dupniçe	5371	26855
Edirne	5439	27195
Edirne (*tetime-i*)	5428	27140
Fener	5416	27080
Filibe	8014	40070
Florine	6790	33950
Foça	3845	19225
Girebine	4450	22250
Gorajde	3552	17760
Görice	4306	21530
Gümülcine	4873	24365
Hırsova (*tetime-i* Silistre)	3826	19130
Holomiç	3429	17145
Hurpişte	3775	18875
Hurpişte (*tetime-i*)	3049	15245
İlbasan	2596	12980
İnebahtı (*hasha-i* İnebahtı)	1334	6670
İpek	3814	19070
İpek	3712	18560
İskarapar	3848	19240
İskenderiye	1007	5035
İskradin (*eflâkan*)	1032	5160
İstanbul	1130	5650
İstanbul (*hasha-i* İstanbul)	3458	17290
İstanbul (*tetime-i*)	9734	48670
İştib	9509	47545
İstife	5457	27285
İvranya	5838	29190
İzdin	5830	29150
İznebol	5175	25875
İzvornik (*eflâkan-i*)	7132	35660
Kalaverta	4819	24095
Kalaverta (*tetime-i*)	5281	26405
Kalkandelen	4188	20940
Karadağ	3802	19010
Karaferiye	3941	19705
Kartina	3351	16755
Kartina *(tetime-i*)	3240	16200
Kerbeneş	4262	21310
Kesriye	4885	24425
Kırçova	5174	25870
Kızılhisar	5199	25995
Kobaş (*eflâkan*)	3339	16695
Köprülü	6115	30575
Koron	2474	12370
Köstendil (Ilıca-i)	7192	35960
Köstendil (*zevayid voynugan*)	3652	18260
Koznik	2475	12375
Kratova	7501	37505
Lap	3764	18820
Livadiya	5087	25435
Lofça	6734	33670
Losinçe	6102	30510
Malakas	4353	21765
Maleşeva	5274	26370
Manastır	3556	17780
Manastır (*tetime-i*)	3438	17190
Mat	1261	6305
Menlik	5144	25720
Mezakiye	4120	20600
Mezistre	5292	26460
Morihova	3735	18675
Morova	6533	32665
Mostar	2978	14890
Moton	6289	31445

Cizye vilâyet	*Hane*	*Inhab.*
Narda	7566	37830
Nevesin (*eflâjan-i*)	2514	12570
Nevrekob	3024	15120
Nevrekob (*rüsüm-i bagat-i*)	4778	23890
Nevrekob (*tetime-i*)	3214	16070
Niğbolu	5939	29695
Niğbolu (*hasha-i* Niğbolu)	2364	11820
Niş	4121	20605
Nova Bırda	5329	26645
Nova ve Prepolye (*rüsüm-i eflâkan-i*)	8121	40605
Ohri	5309	26545
Öziçe	7205	36025
Petriç	3934	19670
Petroş	4747	23735
Pirlepe	3708	18540
Podgoriçe	4953	24765
Pojega (*rüsüm-i eflâkan-i*)	6523	32615
Premedi	4050	20250
Prepolye	8121	40605
Prespa	4279	21395
Prevadi	6586	32930
Priştine	4728	23640
Prizrin	2928	14640
Radomir	4546	22730
Resava	5022	25110
Salta	4757	23785
Samako	6042	30210
Şehirköy	5600	28000
Selânik	6114	30570
Selânik (Yahudiyan)	3547	17735
Semendire	1984	9920
Serfice	5210	26050
Sidrekapsi (*tetime-i* Avrethisarı)	5318	26590
Sidrekapsi (*tetime-i* Selânik)	4201	21005
Silistre	5070	25350
Silivri	2357	11785
Sirebreniçe	5765	28825
Sirem (*rüsüm-i eflâkan-i*)	11894	59470
Siroz	4177	20885
Siroz (*rüsüm-i bagat-i*)	3078	15390
Siroz (*tetime-i*)	4174	20870
Şişan	6141	30705
Sofya	5007	25035
Sofya (*kıptiyan*)	2729	13645
Sofya *(tetime-i*)	4086	20430
Süzebolu	5073	25365
Süzebolu (*tetime-i*)	5176	25880
Timurhisar	6884	34420
Tırhala	3835	19175
Tırnovi	6821	34105
Ürgüb	2509	12545
Üsküb	6262	31310
Ustrumca	4670	23350
Vidin	4767	23835
Vidin (*eflâkan-i*)	4754	23770
Vidin (*tetime-i*)	2993	14965
Vişegrad	5048	25240
Visoka	6475	32375
Vize	3405	17025
Vulçitrın	4357	21785
Vulkaşin	2974	14870

Cizye vilâyet	*Hane*	*Inhab.*
Yanya	2565	12825
Yanya (*gebran-i eşkinciyan*)	3409	17045
Yanya (*tetime-i eşkinciyan*)	3379	16895
Yenice-i Vardar	3369	16845
Yenipazar	5484	27420
Yenişehir	4256	21280
Zıhna	7230	36150
*Unidentified	3970	19850
Total	793,399	3,984,285

New Directions in the Study of Conversion to Islam in Ottoman Rumeli Between the Fourteenth and the Seventeenth Centuries: Reconsidering Methods, Theories and Terminology

Tijana Krstić

In recent years a variety of review essays as well as a massive annotated bibliography composed by a team of experts have undertaken to summarize and evaluate the voluminous scholarly output from roughly the eighteenth to the turn of the twenty-first century on the issue of conversion to Islam in the Ottoman Empire in general and the Ottoman Balkans in particular.[1] Due to the nature of traditional scholarship, the prevalent framework for nearly all of these recent historiographical discussions has been that of the nation state, exposing the by-now-well-known pitfalls of nation(al)ist[2] history, outlining past and recent trends in various national historiographies, their major achievements, and, in some cases, suggesting the directions for future research. Given the centrality of the nation-state in historiography on the subject, it is perhaps not surprising that despite the topic's long-term appeal and controversiality, it was not until 2004 that there appeared a monograph in English (or any other language) devoted fully to the phenomenon of conversion to Islam in the Balkans or the

[1] See, for example, Antonina Zhelyazkova, "Islamization in the Balkans as a Historiographical Problem: the Southeast-European Perspective", in *The Ottomans and the Balkans*, edited by S. Faroqhi and F. Adanır (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 223–266; Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans: Kisve Bahası Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670–1730* (Leiden, Brill, 2004), pp. 28–109; Rossitsa Gradeva, "Conversion to Islam in Bulgarian Historiography: An Overview", in *Religion, Ethnicity and Contested Nationhood in the Former Ottoman Space*, edited by J. Nielsen (Brill, 2011), pp. 187–222; *Les conversions à l'Islam en Asia Mineure et dans les Balkans aux époques seldjoukide et ottoman. Bibliographie raisonnée (1800–2000)*, edited by Gilles Grivaud and Alexandre Popovic (Athens, 2011).

[2] Cemal Kafadar points out that it is useful to refer not merely to nationalism but also "nationism", since many historians who are not nationalists still resort to projecting national identities back into the past and using them as primary analytical categories for writing history. See Cemal Kafadar, "A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum", *Muqarnas* 24 (2007), p. 8.

Ottoman Empire as a whole, followed by several others in recent years.[3] This development seems to suggest that we have entered the post-nation(al)ist phase in the study of the phenomenon, although it is certainly naïve to expect that nationalist paradigms would at any point totally disappear from scholarly, political and popular discourses on this topic. However, it is debatable whether the new "imperial turn"[4] in the study of conversion to Islam by itself offers a solution to the methodological conundrums as well as the theoretical shortcomings that have characterized the research on the subject so far.

The following essay does not aspire to offer yet another historiographical overview. Rather, it sets out to reflect on these methodological and theoretical shortcomings and outline possible solutions, particularly as they relate to the study of conversion in the early Ottoman period, between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. As it will be argued, the key issues in the research on conversion to Islam have been the limited source base, unvaried methodology, and a narrow conceptualization of the phenomenon as a socio-economic issue while mostly ignoring or inadequately addressing cultural or religious factors. Insufficient engagement with the theoretical insights of different disciplines and related historical contexts has resulted in numerous studies that approach conversion to Islam as largely a *sui generis* Ottoman phenomenon in which the state plays a paramount role, and analyze it in terms of binary oppositions such as voluntary/forced, sincere/insincere, complete/incomplete, etc. Closely related to the undertheorized nature of the discussion on conversion to Islam is the broader problem of how Islam in the Ottoman Empire should be studied from a historical perspective.[5]

Although neither of the two "fathers" of modern Ottoman/Turkish studies, Mehmet Fuat Köprülü and Ömer Lütfi Barkan, directly concerned themselves with the issue of conversion to Islam of the non-Muslims (as opposed to the "Turks"), the specter of their theoretical and methodological legacy looms large over the past and present research on the subject. Overcoming some of the more problematic aspects of these legacies, in addition to expanding the source base, posing new research questions, and upgrading our methodological and theoretical toolbox is imperative for understanding conversion to Islam as a

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[3] Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans*; Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam—Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Palo Alto, Stanford University Press, 2011; Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[4] Alan Mikhail and Christine Philliou, "The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54/4 (2012): pp. 721–745.

[5] This essay in part elaborates the arguments I already outlined in the introduction to my *Contested Conversions to Islam.*

complex socio-cultural phenomenon central to the study of not only Ottoman but early modern history as well.

1. THE MIXED BLESSINGS OF THE BARKAN LEGACY

While it is true that until recently research on conversion to Islam in the "Ottoman Balkans"[6] had been undertaken within the framework of the nation state, it is also true that investigations have been highly atomized, with particular regions that once made up the administrative units of the Ottoman Empire in Europe (hereafter, Rumeli) serving as the basic units of analysis. While some historians were content to focus only on what can be said about a particular region, others "added up" available case studies to shed light on conversion to Islam in "Bulgarian", "Serbian" or "Albanian lands", often extrapolating findings from the better-studied regions to those areas of the modern nation-states for which less data or research was available. These case studies have been based on the fiscal registers (*tapu tahrir defterleri*) compiled by the Ottoman authorities in every region where they established their direct rule, which since the 1940s Ottomanists have embraced as *the* sources for the study of demographic changes during the Ottoman period, including conversion to Islam. The earliest registers extend to the early fifteenth century and thus figure as the earliest Ottoman sources that can be reliably dated and used for historical analysis of the Ottoman presence in Rumeli.[7] First to outline the methodology for working with these sources was Ömer Lütfi Barkan (1902–79), whose historical demographic approach established "defterology" as one of the most prominent methodological schools in the field of Ottoman studies, embraced by Turkish and non-Turkish historians alike.[8]

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[6] Scholarly concerns about the consequences of the nationalist historiography for the discourses and policies towards Muslims in the Balkans, especially since the 1990s, made the "Balkans" the key term and framework of analysis in recent historiography, even for the period between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, rather than the less ideologically loaded and more historically accurate "Rumeli". Reframing the discussion thus entails not only distancing oneself from the framework of the nation-state but also from that of the "Balkans".

[7] The earliest such fiscal register dates to AH 835 (1431–1432) from the *sancak* of Arvanid (which included most of the territories in today's southern and central Albania). The earliest registers for the entire Ottoman Rumeli date to the late fifteenth century. For a detailed discussion on the sources for population statistics of the Ottoman Balkans see Minkov, *Conversions*, pp. 28–63.

[8] Key works are Ö. L. Barkan, "Tarihi Demografi Araştırmaları ve Osmanlı Tarihi", *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 7–8 (1954): pp. 1–26, idem, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir İskân ve Kolonizasyon Metodu olarak Vakıflar ve Temlikler", *Vakıflar Dergisi* 2 (1942): pp. 284–353 and

Focusing on the *tahrir defters*, typically at the exclusion of any other source, between the 1940s and the 1990s scholars produced a considerable body of work using methods of demographic studies to compile statistical data on conversion to Islam in Rumeli. The primary research question was concerned with how many people converted in a given area in a given period. Generally speaking, the data showed that conversion was minimal in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, increased slightly in the late fifteenth and rose steadily throughout the sixteenth century, peaking in the mid-seventeenth century only to slow down and come to an almost complete stop by the end of the eighteenth century.[9] However, significant regional differences existed in the process across Rumeli that have been explained by the timing and nature of a particular region's incorporation into the Ottoman domains (for instance, did the area surrender or was it taken by force?), by the configuration and influence of the local political and church structures, by the profile and numbers of the Muslim immigrants to the area, the urban or rural character of the area, etc.

Research on the basis of *tahrir defterleri* has also shown that the question of conversion has to be considered within the larger problem of the formation of Muslim communities in Rumeli, which in different regions entailed not only the local population embracing Islam but a significant influx—which Barkan and others viewed as state-organized—of Muslim immigrants from Anatolia, nomadic as well as military. This, in turn, triggered a debate on whether conversion or colonization was the most significant factor in the origins of Muslim communities in Rumeli, with Balkan historians emphasizing the former, and Turkish historians, including Barkan, being more interested in and emphasizing the latter. Although it is by now obvious that the formation of Muslim communities in Rumeli comprised both processes, each in smaller or greater measure depending on the region, elements of this debate continue to this day (see below). A corollary of this debate is the question of what exactly should be understood under the term "Islamization" (Tr. *islamlaşma*): while some scholars have been using this concept as synonymous with "conversion", others understand it more broadly to include a wider range of phenomena related to the establishment of Islam in a particular region that are not only demographic but spatial and cultural too. Furthermore, while in English "Islamization" has been widely accepted as an appropriate term of scholarly

idem, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir İskân ve Kolonizasyon Metodu olarak Sürgünler," in several volumes of the İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat *Fakültesi Mecmuası* (1949–1954). On "defterology" see Heath Lowry, *Studies in Defterology* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1992) and idem., *Defterology Revisited—Studies on 15th & 16th Century Ottoman Society* (Istanbul: Isis, 2008).

[9] For a summary see Minkov, *Conversions*, pp. 37–62.

analysis, in some contexts scholars have found it overly value-laden and prefer the more neutral expression "spread of Islam".[10]

In terms of interplay between conversion and colonization, census records suggest that Thrace, conquered by the Ottomans in the mid-fourteenth century, saw extensive colonization by Muslims from Anatolia but also a steady rise in local conversions over the centuries. Similar dynamics unfolded in the eastern Rhodopes as well as in Deli Orman and Dobruja in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the result that most of the Muslim communities in these regions speak Turkish.[11] On the other hand, conversion was more central to the formation of the Muslim communities in Bosnia, Albania and the Rhodope mountains, where Muslims speak mostly local languages. Bosnia, conquered in the mid-fifteenth century, experienced a rapid and extensive process of conversion of the local population to Islam (almost 100 percent in Sarajevo), which appears to have been already complete by the end of the sixteenth century. Herzegovina, however, underwent a slower and more limited process of conversion. Scholars are still investigating the nature of the religious dynamic in medieval Bosnia before the Ottoman conquest that made this mass acceptance of Islam possible.[12] By contrast, another majority Muslim area today, Albania, which was conquered gradually over the course of the fifteenth century, saw a significant onset of conversion to Islam only in the second half of the seventeenth century, presumably due to the increase of both

[10] See the special issue of the *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 41 (1991) based on the papers presented at a conference entitled "Širenje islama i islamska kultura u bosanskom ejaletu" [Spread of Islam and Islamic Culture in the *Eyalet* of Bosnia] (March 7–9, 1991), where the distinction between the terms "islamizacija" (Islamization) and "širenje islama" (spread of Islam) was discussed, and the latter was embraced by a number of Bosnian scholars as less encumbered by the notion of coercion, and thus more appropriate.

[11] On Thrace see, for instance, Machiel Kiel, "Tatar Pazarcik. The Development of an Ottoman Town in Central-Bulgaria or the Story of how the Bulgarians conquered Upper Thrace without firing a shot", in *Das osmanische Reich und seinen Archivalien und Chroniken, Nejat Göyünc zu Ehren*, edited by Klaus Kreiser, Christoph Neuman (Istanbul, 1997), pp. 31–67; and Grigor Boykov, "Demographic Features of Ottoman Upper Thrace: A Case Study on Filibe, Tatar Pazarcık and İstanimaka (1472–1614)," MA Thesis, Bilkent University, 2004; on Deliorman and Dobruja see Nikolay Antov, "Imperial Expansion, Colonization, and Conversion to Islam in the Islamic World's 'Wild West': The Formation of the Muslim Community in Ottoman Deliorman (N. E. Balkans, 15th–16th Centuries)", PhD Thesis, University of Chicago, 2011.

[12] Publications on the Rhodopes and Bosnia, the two most-researched regions of the Balkans, are too numerous to list here. For an overview of the research on Bosnia see Alexander Lopasic, "Islamization of the Balkans with Special Reference to Bosnia", *Journal of Islamic Studies* (1994) 5 (2): pp. 163–186. For recent research on the Rhodopes, see various studies by Evgeni Radushev, especially his *Pomatsite: Khristianstvo i Isliam v Zapadnite Rodopi s dolinata na r. Mesta, XV-30-te godini na XVIII vek*, vol. 1 (Sofia: NBKM, 2005).

the poll tax (*cizya*) and the so-called urgent (*avariz*) taxes in the region, as well as due to significant population shifts.[13]

Research using fiscal registers has also suggested that in the regions where conversion of the local population was more extensive than colonization, some common factors are observable across Rumeli. For instance, fifteenth-century *defters* suggest that the earliest converts to Islam typically came from the ranks of the Balkan nobility and military elite that could supply the Ottomans with the manpower and know-how needed to administer the region. Although conversion was not a prerequisite for joining the Ottomans and obtaining a fief (*timar*) from the sultan, over time these local converts to Ottoman governance also became converts to Islam—a process that could take several generations to be fully completed. The example of these early converts was later followed by others, but the overall dynamics of the process were influenced by a variety of local factors.[14]

Despite their popularity among scholars studying conversion to Islam, methodologically speaking, fiscal registers are far from straightforward sources. Two kinds of *tapu tahrir defterleri* survive in the Ottoman archives: detailed (*mufassal*), which generally listed all sources of taxation in a given administrative unit in some detail, including the names of the taxed population, and synoptic or summary (*icmal*) ones that provided summary totals and how they were to be expended. In the rush to extract and compile quantitative data for statistical analysis of demographic changes in particular regions, it has often been forgotten that by themselves these records offer only a partial picture. First of all, they list only the tax-paying (*re'aya*) population inhabiting the landholdings (*timars*) of the Ottoman cavalrymen (*sipahis*) in a given region. They typically do not say anything about other types of population in the region living, for instance, on the land of imperial and other pious endowments (*vakf*), or about the population availing themselves of a "special status" and being exempt from taxes, from the members of the ruling (*askeri*) class to groups that performed special services for the Ottoman state, such as *vojnuk*, *yürük*, *martolos*, *derbenci*, etc.[15] Furthermore, the limitations of using *tahrir defterleri* as a source for demographic analysis include

[13] On Albania see Zhelyazkova, "Islamization in the Balkans", pp. 237–245; Dritan Egro, "Islamization in the Balkans 14–17th Centuries: The Case of Albanian Lands," PhD thesis, Bilkent University, 2002.

[14] Halil İnalcık, *Hicri 835 Tarihli Suret-i Defter-i Sanacak-i Arvanid* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1954); Melek Delilbaşı, "Christian Sipahis in the Tırhala Taxation Registers (15th and 16th Centuries)", in *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire*, edited by A. Anastasopoulos (Herakleion: Crete University Press, 2005), pp. 87–114; Heath Lowry, *Fifteenth Century Ottoman Realities: Christian Peasant Life on the Aegean Island of Limnos* (Istanbul: Eren, 2002), etc.

[15] On this point see Heath Lowry, "The Ottoman Tahrir Defterleri as a Source for Social and Economic History: Pitfalls and Limitations", in *idem*, *Studies in Defterology*, 3–18; Grigor Boykov, "Etno-religiozniat oblik na osmanskia grad Filibe—kraia na XV-nachaloto na XVI

the fact that numbers in them are expressed in terms of households (*hane*), the average size of which has been subject to debate, that different taxes were levied on *hane*s of different sizes, and that villages could be switched between registers in consecutive surveys (not to mention varying climatic conditions and natural disasters that could influence population flux).[16]

In light of the possible methodological pitfalls of using *tahrir defter*s, in recent years the calls for diversifying the source base have become louder.[17] A more methodologically sound usage of the *defter*s entails putting them into dialogue with other types of, first of all, fiscal sources, such as records of tax-exempt population (*muaf defterleri*), sipahis (*yoklama defterleri*), tax registers of the pious endowments and private lands (*evkaf* and *emlak defterleri*), etc., if it is possible to find these for the region under investigation.[18] For the period closely following the region's conquest, especially if major cities in the area did not surrender to the Ottoman troops, it is particularly important to pay attention to the numbers of slaves, many of whom ended up as the property of pious endowments and raider (*akıncı*) commanders.[19] For instance, almost nothing is known about different aspects of slavery in the first century and a half of the Ottoman rule in Rumeli nor the extent or way in which it intersected with the process of conversion.

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vek", in *Balkanski identichnosti,* Vol. III, edited by E. Radushev, S. Fetvadzhieva (Sofia: Institut za izsledvane na integraciata, 2003), pp. 130–151 (esp. p. 131).

[16] Minkov, *Conversions to Islam*, pp. 34–35. See also Evgeni Radushev, "Meaning of the Historiographic Myths about Conversion to Islam", *Halil* İnalcık *Armağanı I—Tarih Araştırmaları* (Doğu-Batı Yayınları, 2009), pp. 1–29 (available at https://www.academia.edu/1807928/MEANING_OF_THE_HISTORIOGRAPHIC_MYTHS_ABOUT_CONVERSION_TO_ISLAM, accessed on October 10, 2014).

[17] See Evgeni Radushev, "The Spread of Islam in the Ottoman Balkans: Revisiting Bulliet's Method on Religious Conversion", *Oriental Archive* 78 (2010): pp. 363–384; Antov, "Imperial Expansion", pp. 26–29. The problem of single-source methodology, of course, extends beyond defterologists. Whether we are working with *defter*s, registrations of the new Muslims in the kadi court records, or a series of converts' petitions to the sultan for the *kisve bahasi* (the price of new clothing awarded to new Muslims), it is clear that the picture derived by using single-source methodology is skewed and allows us to see only as much as a particular office of the Ottoman administration that produced the source "allows."

[18] For an example of such methodologically sound usage of various types of fiscal sources see Antov, "Imperial Expansion".

[19] An important source on this issue for the mid-fifteenth century is Georgius of Hungaria (*Tractatus de moribus, condicionibus et nequicia turcorum. Traktat über die Sitten, die Lebensverhältnisse und die Arglist der Türken*, edited and translated by Reinhard Klockow (Vienna: Böhlau, 1994). See also recent studies by York Norman, "An Islamic City? Sarajevo's Islamization and Economic Development, 1461–1604", PhD Thesis, Georgetown University, 2005, pp. 40–74; and Zeynep Yürekli-Görkay, "Legend and Architecture in the Ottoman Empire: The Shrine of Seyyid Gazi and Hacı Bektaş", PhD thesis, Harvard University, 2005, p. 134.

However, once a more complete demographic picture of the population in given areas through a careful juxtaposition of fiscal records (in cases where they survive) is obtained, the question of interpretation arises. One can pose only as many questions based on the *defters*, and numbers do not speak for themselves but make sense only in a larger historical and source context. In order to remedy this methodological impasse, some historians have suggested that a more consistent effort to consult other types of administrative sources in conjunction with the fiscal ones would allow for the reconstruction of the socio-economic and political context in which the demographic changes in question were taking place. It would also resolve the tension between the micro aspects of the phenomenon, which are inevitably at the foreground of the research with *defters*, and macro aspects that are typically missing in such studies, thus allowing the imperial perspective to replace the national one as a more historically appropriate frame of analysis.[20] This task is easier for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when a variety of new administrative sources become available for Rumeli, such as the Ottoman court records (*kadı sicilleri*), legal *responsa* of the Ottoman jurisprudents (*fetava*), or converts' petitions to the Ottoman imperial council (*kisve bahası* petitions). Recent studies that engage in the exploration of these kinds of sources have shed light on their potential to enhance our understanding of the institutional, legal and procedural aspects of conversion in the Ottoman Empire, changes in the way the Ottoman state understood and sought to publicly present conversion, the agency of the converts, the importance of patronage, and the role of gender and slavery in the process of conversion, etc.[21]

These methodological suggestions are certainly a welcome change and have resulted in some sound empirical research in recent years that affirm the value of *defters* as sources for the study of formation of Muslim communities in Rumeli, when carefully analyzed, and the potential of the region-based approach for shedding light on empire-wide dynamics and developments. For instance, in his study of Deliorman, Antov shows the necessity of thinking of the empire as a whole when explaining the origins of the Muslim communities in the region that grew exponentially from the first half of the sixteenth century onward due to the influx of the refugees as well as the forcibly resettled population with Alid allegiances from the Ottoman-Safavid borderlands in Anatolia. Importantly, Antov challenges Barkan and his followers for their overemphasis on the agency of the state in this process of migration and colonization, arguing that

[20] This is implied by Radushev, "The Spread of Islam", and Antov, "Imperial Expansion".

[21] Minkov, *Conversion to Islam*; Marc David Baer, "Islamic Conversion Narratives of Women: Social Change and Gendered Religious Hierarchy in Early Modern Ottoman Istanbul", *Gender & History* 16 (2004): pp. 425–448; idem, *Honored by the Glory of Islam.*

rather than being state-orchestrated, much of the population drift was in fact unregulated.[22]

However, over-emphasis on the regulatory powers of the state, whether in the process of conversion or colonization, is one of the risks of working only with the sources generated by various Ottoman administrative offices. Although invaluable in advancing the discussion on conversion to Islam in the Ottoman context, recent studies of conversion have also for the most part privileged the state's perspective on the issue by drawing mostly on the archives of the Ottoman central government and Ottoman courts, which present conversion in highly formulaic administrative language that often completely effaces the converts' own words. In this way, they have perpetuated the notion that "the state" was the key agent of conversion rather than just one of many participants in a process that involved a variety of social actors and initiatives. Thus, neither nation(al)ist historiography, nor the new, post-imperial turn historiography is immune to statism and understanding of the phenomenon of conversion to Islam primarily in terms of state-subject relations.

In order to change the terms of the debate it is necessary to move beyond approaching the issue of conversion as an algorythm determined by socio-economic status and the state's ability to interfere in the lives of its subjects while ignoring a variety of individual, communal, and cultural factors. For, although we now have an approximate idea about the percentages of converts in various parts of Ottoman Rumeli and regional dynamics of conversion, we still do not know much about the particular situations and contexts in which people decided to embrace Islam, what the experience of the process was like for the converts, their families and communities, how Islam was understood and practiced by the novices, etc.

For these perspectives one has to venture into the domain of cultural history and the muddle of non-administrative, often narrative sources, both Ottoman Muslim and non-Muslim, that due to the socio-economic focus (and often positivist outlook) of the Ottoman studies as a field have been traditionally considered as "unreliable" sources of empirical data on conversion compared to *tahrir defterleri*. This is not to say, however, that studies dealing with the cultural aspects of conversion based on narrative sources do not exist, nor that narrative sources are the antidote to nation(al)ist (or otherwise problematic) historiography—on the contrary. Such studies have been strongly influenced by the school of Turkish literary history established in the 1930s by Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, acknowledged by many as the founder of the modern field of Turkish and Ottoman history. Again, one must carefully consider the methodological and theoretical legacies of the existing research, primarily the questions

[22] Antov, "Imperial Expansion", p. 216.

they raise about certain terms and concepts entrenched in the historiography on conversion, before venturing into suggestions for future inquiries.

2. THE "KÖPRÜLÜ PARADIGM" AND BEYOND

If the legacy of Ömer Lütfi Barkan looms large in the demographic studies on conversion that have given us the Ottoman state as the key protagonist in the process, the legacy of Mehmet Fuat Köprülü (1890–1966) is central to the studies based on hagiographic literature from both Anatolia and Rumeli that have brought us the Sufi mystics, often in their dual role as holy men and *gazi* warriors, as the key agents of "religious propaganda" and conversion to Islam.[23] Köprülü started as a student of Turkish literature and drew on his expertise in working with narrative sources and poetry as a historian too, eventually setting up a methodological framework followed by many scholars to this day when dealing with hagiographical and other literary material from Sufi milieu or otherwise. Postulating a continuity of Turkish culture from pre-Islamic to modern times, Köprülü was particularly interested in Turkish folk Islam in medieval Anatolia, which he understood as a blend of Central Asian shamanism and popular Sufism that was disseminated among the nomadic Turkmen tribes in Anatolia by their religious leaders (*babas*) that became Sufis. Köprülü saw these newly, "outwardly" Islamized nomadic Turkmen tribes as adherents of what he characterized as "popular", "syncretic", "heterodox" Islam that stood in stark contrast to the "orthodox", "learned" Islam of the urban Muslim elites. This "popular" Islam that, according to Köprülü, contained elements of Shiism and esotericism, was championed in thirteenth-century Anatolia by the "Abdals of Rum", only to be inherited later on by the Bektashi order of dervishes that became the paradigmatic heterodox Sufi order in the literature on religious life in the early Ottoman polity.[24]

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[23] Examples abound but see, for instance, Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 363–396; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Bazı Menakibnamelere Göre XIII-XV. Yüzyılardaki İhtidalarda Heterodoks Şeyh ve Dervişlerin Rolü", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 2 (1981): pp. 31–42.

[24] Köprülü expounded his views in a variety of publications, most notably in his *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar* (Istanbul: Matba'a-i 'Âmire, 1918) [translated into English as *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, trans. and edited by Gary Leiser and Robert Dankoff, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006)]; and idem., "Anadolu'da islâmiyet: Türk istilâsından sonra Anadolu tarih-i dinisine bir nazar ve bu tarihin menbalar", *Darülfünün Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuasi* 2 (1922): pp. 281–311, 385–420, 457–486 [translated into English as *Islam in Anatolia after the Turkish Invasion: (Prolegomena)*, trans. Gary Leiser, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993)]; idem., "Bektaşiliğin Menşeleri: Küçük Asya'da Islâm Batınîliğinin Tekâmül-i Tarihisi Hakkında Bir Tecrübe", *Türk Yurdu* II/8 (1341 (1925): pp. 121–140, etc.

These, in short, are the key elements of what has been dubbed in recent critical literature as the "Köprülu paradigm" that has decisively shaped the study of the religious landscape and dynamics of medieval Anatolia throughout the twentieth century and is only now coming under serious reconsideration.[25] When it comes to the study of conversion to Islam in Ottoman Rumeli, Köprülü's legacy is relevant in several respects, but particularly in conjunction with the work of Barkan and Fredrick Hasluck, which is why in this context we can more accurately refer to a "Köprülü-Barkan-Hasluck paradigm". Before examining its constituent elements, it is important to clarify the connections between the work of these three scholars. Although Barkan and Köprülü worked on two different methodological tracks, the former built on the latter in his seminal work on "colonizing dervishes", which explored the deeds of pious endowments (*vakfiye*) from the early Ottoman period (fifteenth–seventeenth centuries) in both Ottoman Anatolia and Rumeli to demonstrate the pivotal role of the dervish orders and their convents in establishing a Muslim and by extension Ottoman presence in newly conquered territories, and ministering to the Muslim settlers, especially nomadic Turkmen (*yürük*).[26] However, neither Köprülü nor Barkan *a priori* concerned themselves with the process of non-Turks' adoption of Islam.

The styling of the Bektashi dervishes as the key agents of proselytization to non-Muslims emerged thanks to the monumental work of Fredrick Hasluck (1878–1920) entitled *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans* (1929). For instance, in his seminal article Barkan referred to Hasluck's work to suggest that "colonizing dervishes" brought about conversions of Christians as well.[27] An antiquarian, archaeologist and avid amateur anthropologist who was certainly more familiar with Christian heresies and the history of Christianity than Islam, Hasluck collected legends about various shrine complexes in the Balkans and Anatolia, especially those that once used to be Christian but at some point

[25] See, for instance, Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Origins of Anatolian Sufism", in *Sufism and Sufis in Ottoman Society: Sources, Doctrine, Rituals, Turuq, Architecture, Literature, Iconography, Modernism*, edited by Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2005), pp. 67–95; Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, "The *Vefa'iyye*, The Bektashiyye, and Genealogies of the "Heterodox" Islam in Anatolia: Rethinking the Köprülü Paradigm", *Turcica* 44 (2012): pp. 263–284; Markus Dressler, *Writing Religion—The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); A.C.S. Peacock, Bruno de Nicola and Sara Nur Yıldız, "Introduction", *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, edited by A.C.S. Peacock, B. de Nicola, S. N. Yıldız, (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 1–22.

[26] Ö. L. Barkan, "Osmanlı imparatoluğunda bir iskân ve kolonizasyon metodu olarak vakıflar ve temlikler I: İstila devirlerinin kolonizatör dervişleri ve zaviyeleri," *Vakıflar Dergisi* II (1942): pp. 279–386.

[27] Ibid., p. 295.

during the Ottoman rule became Muslim sacred spaces. Particularly influential was his analysis of what he named "ambiguous sanctuaries" where both Muslims and Christians worshipped simultaneously, usually venerating the same saint under a different name. These kinds of sites, Hasluck suggested, were also major arenas in which "heterodox" dervishes, particularly of the Bektashi order, proselytized to non-Muslims by offering them a particular "syncretic" blend of Islam.[28] Unlike Köprülü's syncretic Islam, which was a blend of Islam and shamanism, Hasluck's syncretic Islam was heavily "Christianized"—however, in both cases the key disseminators of such Islam were the Bektashi dervishes, whose name thus became synonymous with "syncretism" and "heterodoxy".[29]

By using the terms "syncretic" and "heterodox" as adjectives for Islam that was allegedly disseminated among and adopted by Rumeli Christians, as well as adhered to by groups labeled as "Bektashi," "Alevi" and "Kızılbash," often without historicizing differences among them, the scholars working within the "Köprülü-Barkan-Hasluck paradigm" infused the study of religious dynamics in Ottoman Rumeli in general and conversion to Islam in particular with a problematic understanding of Islam as a religious tradition. As I have already elaborated on this issue elsewhere,[30] suffice it to say here, as Markus Dressler points out, that the deployment of terms "syncretic" and "heterodox" not only arbitrates on what is to be considered an "authentic" or "less authentic" religious experience (typically privileging scriptural over charismatic basis of belief), but also casually uses apologetic and pejorative terms as scholarly vocabu-

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[28] See in particular his "Ambiguous Sanctuaries and Bektashi Propaganda", *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 20, (1913/1914): pp. 94–119, republished in Fredick W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, Vol. II, edited by Margaret M. Hasluck (Oxford University Press, 1929), pp. 564–596.

[29] Examples of studies employing this paradigm abound, but see in particular Vryonis, *Decline* and idem, "Religious Changes and Patterns in the Balkans, 14th–16th Centuries", in *Aspects of the Balkans*, edited by Henrik Birnbaum and Spyros Vryonis, Jr (The Hague, Mouton, 1972), pp. 151–176; Michel Balivet, "Aux origines de l'islamisation des Balkans ottomans", *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 66/4 (1992): pp. 11–20; idem, *Romanie byzantine et pays de Rûm turc* (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 1994); Harry T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans* (London: Hurst and Co., 1993); Irène Melikoff, "Les voies de pénétration de l'hétérodoxie islamique en Thrace et dans les Balkans aux XIVe–XVe siècles", in *The Via Egnatia Under Ottoman Rule (1380–1699)*, edited by Elisabeth Zachariadou (Rethymno, Crete University Press, 1996), pp. 159–170, etc.

[30] Tijana Krstić, "The Ambiguous Politics of "Ambiguous Sanctuaries": F. Hasluck and Historiography on Syncretism and Conversion to Islam in 15th- and 16th-century Ottoman Rumeli", in *Archaeology, Anthropology and Heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia: The Life and Times of F. W. Hasluck—Vol. 3* [proceedings of the conference that took place in 2006], edited by D. Shankland (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2013), pp. 245–262; idem., *Contested Conversions to Islam*, pp. 16–18.

lary, thus normalizing them and masking their polemical origins. This kind of secular scholarly discourse that assumes the position of Islamic law and passes evaluation on certain practitioners of Islam (for instance, Alevis) has also given fuel to modern identity politics in Turkey and elsewhere.[31] Furthermore, in the literature on conversion to Islam scholarly discussions of syncretism have been typically accompanied by the theory about "incomplete" or "superficial" conversions, suggesting that those who converted to a "syncretic" Islam were not "real, authentic" Muslims.[32] Along with the terms "syncretism" and "heterodoxy" it would be important to rethink and historicize the concept of 'crypto- Christianity' that has also had a problematic role to play in this broader discourse on Islam in the Balkans, especially in Albania, as "inauthentic" in some way.[33]

Although scholars working within the "Köprülü-Barkan-Hasluck paradigm" ostensibly paid more attention to religious and cultural factors, their discussions reflect a secular, Protestant conceptualization of religious identity that subordinates religion to socio-economic factors and separates it from them.[34] While a secularist, socio-economic bias certainly affected Ottoman Studies throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the question of how to integrate religious questions into historical research and what it would mean to "take religion seriously" is an issue with which many other fields have struggled too.[35] As some of the recent research suggests, the answers lie in a

[31] Markus Dressler, "How to Conceptualize Inner-Islamic Plurality/Difference: 'Heterodoxy' and 'Syncretism' in the Writings of Mehmet F. Köprülü (1890–1966)", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37/3 (2010): pp. 241–260.

[32] During the 1990s, the concept of "syncretism" began to feature prominently in the studies reacting to Balkan nationalist and Orientalist historiography, especially the works that portrayed the Ottoman rule exclusively in terms of religious fanaticism and oppression. These appropriations of the concept sought to establish the image of the Ottoman state as a "tolerant" and "inclusive" enterprise, unlike its modern successor states in the Balkans. Furthermore, this kind of rhetoric has been particularly central to the discussions on European or Balkan Islam in attempts to distinguish it from and portray it as less menacing than "Arab Islam". See, for instance, Balivet, "Aux origines".

[33] See Stavro Skendi, "Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans," *Slavic Review* 26/2 (1967): pp. 227–246. For a recent study on the notion of "crypto" religion see Maurus Reinkowski, "Hidden Believers, Hidden Apostates: The Phenomenon of Crypto-Jews and Crypto-Christians in the Middle East", in *Converting cultures: religion, ideology of transformations of modernity*, edited by Dennis Washburn and A. Kevin Reinhart (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. 409–433.

[34] See Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 28–29; Dressler, "How to Conceptualize", p. 246.

[35] For instance, in the field of early modern German history the development of the "confessionalization paradigm" was a reaction to the emphasis on socio-economic factors in German historical scholarship in the 1970s. However, instead of focusing on the phenomenon of

more comprehensive interdisciplinary approach to the issues of conversion and religious identificatory practices, especially in a dialogue with theories of religion, anthropology, sociology, comparative literature, and postcolonial studies.

In order to start historicizing Ottoman Islam, it is necessary to approach it as a historically changing field of practice and debate and look into the variety of Muslim interpretative communities that were not neatly aligned along the binary (high/low; urban/rural) or "typical actors" categories, such as "the state", "the ulema", "Sufis" or the "folk".[36] For instance, it is helpful to keep in mind that Sufism was not a property of the Sufi orders but a widely available religious discourse that was appropriated in a variety of ways by different social actors. Instead of assuming that the typical actors always acted in predictable ways, it is necessary to explore over a period of time the competing Islamic initiatives as well as individual and institutional attitudes towards particular issues, such as conversion or "orthodoxy". Such an approach preserves rather than effaces the essential feature of Islamic tradition, namely constant argument and conflict over the form and significance of practices in the absence of a single authoritative source on matters of religion.[37]

For instance, building on the insights from other disciplines, in the last decade, the field of Ottoman studies has benefited from an increasing realization, supported by new research, that the articulation of a Sunni orthodoxy in the Ottoman Empire was a process that accompanied the articulation of the Ottoman imperial identity and dynastic legitimacy as well as canonization of the Hanefi law. This process seems to have begun in the fifteenth century with the rising class of the ulema associated with the state, and picked up the pace over the course of the sixteenth century in response to the rise of the rival Shi'a Safavid state, only to attain new dynamics in the seventeenth

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the *Konfessionsbildung* (the formation of Lutheran, Calvinist, and reformed Catholic confessions) only to the extent that it affected ecclesiastical and theological realms, the confessionalization paradigm was a "methodological-theoretical societal paradigm" that concerned itself with the impact of this phenomenon on the realms of politics and culture as well as on its effects on both public and private spheres. See Heinz Schilling, "Confessionalization: Historical and Scholarly Perspectives of a Comparative and Interdisciplinary Paradigm", in *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555–1700—Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nishan*, edited John M. Headley, Hans-Joachim Hillerbrand, and Anthony J. Papalas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 21–36 (esp. pp. 22–23).

[36] In a recent article Ocak sets out to identify "typical actors" producing Ottoman Islam. See Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Islam in the Ottoman Empire: A Sociological Framework for a New Interpretation", *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 9, no. 1 & 2 (2003): pp. 183–198. For a critique of the tendency to analyze in terms of "typical actors" see Talal Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam", (Washington, D.C., Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arabic Studies, 1986), pp. 14–16.

[37] See Asad, "The Idea".

century.[38] The research on this problem has been informed by a more historically- and anthropologically-minded approach to the problem of "orthodoxy" not as one of timeless "authentic belief" but of a continuously changing body of "'generally accepted' beliefs, theological ideas and practical guiding principles" that was closely related to the configuration of power in the political arena.[39]

Furthermore, recent studies show that a variety of social actors besides the state participated in the contestation of power for the right to define and impose an "orthodoxy" and "orthopraxy". The groundbreaking work in this respect was Natalie Clayer's 1994 study on the Halveti Sufi order, since it pointed to the politics of Sunnitization in the sixteenth century and called attention to the participation of Sufi şeyhs (rather than just the state or, later, Kadizadeli preachers) in the process of defining and policing the boundaries of a "Sunni orthodoxy".[40] In recent years, a number of new studies have shed light on the role of various Sufi orders and individuals in the Ottoman arena of Sunnitization, as well as on the interplay of mysticism, its practitioners, and society. In this way, new studies have moved beyond the Köprülü-inspired focus on the medieval, "heterodox" dervish orders and set out to explore interfaces between Sufism and society in the "age of empires", demonstrating that this is a field of research with great potential to shed light on religious politics in the Ottoman Empire, and by extension, on the study of conversion as a social and cultural phenomenon.[41]

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[38] See for instance Markus Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy: Competing Claims for Authority and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Safavid Conflict", in *Legitimizing the Order—The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, edited by H. Karateke and M. Reinkowski (Leiden, Brill, 2005), pp. 151–176; Nabil al-Tikriti, "*Kalam* in the Service of the State: Apostasy and the Defining of Ottoman Islamic Identity", in *Legitimizing the Order*, pp. 131–150; Tijana Krstić, "Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 1 (2009): pp. 35–63; Derin Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization: A Historiographical Discussion", *Turcica* 44 (2012–13): pp. 301–338; Guy Burak, "Faith, law and empire in the Ottoman 'age of confessionalization' (fifteenth–seventeenth centuries): the case of 'renewal of faith'", *Mediterranean Historical Review* 28/1 (2013): pp. 1–23, etc.

[39] See Alexander Knysh, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Medieval Islam: An Essay in Reassessment", *Muslim World* 83 (1993): pp. 48–67; Asad, "The Idea"; M. Brett Wilson, "The Failure of Nomenclature: The Concept of "Orthodoxy" in the Study of Islam", *Comparative Islamic Studies* 3/2 (2007): pp. 169–194; Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize", etc.

[40] Natalie Clayer, *Mystiques, état & société—Les Halvetis dans l'aire balkanique de la fin du XVe siècle à nos jours* (Leiden, Brill, 1994).

[41] Dina Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism: Naqshbandis in the Ottoman World, 1450–1700*, (New York: State University Press of New York, 2005); John Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought in the Ottoman Empire: The Rise of the Halveti Order, 1350–1650* (Edin-

The growing popularity and methodological complexity of cultural history within the field of Ottomans studies since the 1990s has gone hand in hand with a greater attention paid by historians to the narrative sources, their rhetorical and genre features, questions of authorship and audience, changing contexts of circulation, the relationship between oral and written registers, etc. When it comes to the study of religious phenomena, particularly important new insights have begun to emerge from research examining such neglected sources as catechisms (*ilm-i hals*), anti-Shi'a/ Christian/ Jewish polemical treatises authored by Sufis, converts to Islam or Ottoman jurists, and Alevi sources (such as Alevi *dedes' shajaras* (*seyyid* genealogies), *ijazas* (Sufi diplomas), *hilafetnames* (letters of appointment as Sufi *halife*), or *ziyaretnames* (evidence of their holders' visiting Shi'i/Alevi shrines)), which have allowed historians to examine different phases and strategies in the Ottoman state's and other actors' attempts to control the discourse on "orthodoxy" between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries.[42] These new perceptions of "orthodoxy" have also begun to influence studies on conversion to Islam, albeit resulting in very different methodological and analytical approaches to the subject.[43]

3. DESIDERATA

One of the most important requirements as research progresses is a consistent effort to find new sources and to set up a dialogue among a variety of different

burgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 1–193; Derin Terzioğlu, "Sufis in the Age of State-building and Confessionalization", in C. Woodhead, ed., *The Ottoman World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 86–99; Nile Green, *Sufism—A Global History* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012);*Sufism and Society, Arrangements of the mystical in the Muslim World, 1200–1800*, edited by John J. Curry and Erik Ohlander (New York: Routledge, 2012), etc.

[42] See, for instance, Ayfer Karakaya Stump, "Subjects of the Sultan, Disciples of the Shah: Formation and Transformation of the Kizilbash/Alevi Communities in Ottoman Anatolia", PhD thesis, Harvard University, 2008, for research on Alevi communities in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, pp. 26–50 and Derin Terzioğlu, "Where İlm-i *Hal* meets Cathechism: Islamic Manuals of Religious Instruction in the Ottoman Empire in the Age of Confessionalization" *Past & Present* 220/1 (2013): pp. 79–114 on catechisms and Sufis' role in the contestation of "orthodoxy"; and Krstić, "Illuminated by the Glory of Islam", Judith Pfeiffer, "Confessional Polarization in the 17th Century Ottoman Empire and Yusūf İbn Ebī 'Abdü'd-Deyyān's *Keşfü'l-esrār fī ilzāmi'l-Yehud ve'l-ahbār*", in *Contacts and Controversies between Muslims, Jews and Christians in the Ottoman Empire and Pre-Modern Iran*, edited by Camilla Adang and Sabine Schmidtke (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2010), pp. 15–56, and Sabine Schmidtke and Camilla Adang, "Ahmad Tashkubrizade's (d. 968/1561) Polemical Tract Against Judaism," *Al-Qantara* 29/1 (2008): pp. 79–113 on anti-Christian and anti-Jewish polemical treatises by converts to Islam.

[43] Baer, *Honored by the Glory*; Krstić, *Contested Conversions*; Antov, "Imperial Expansion".

sources in order to achieve a more complex understanding of the process and actors involved in conversion to Islam while exposing the shortcomings of each particular source. The attempts to gain more "immediate" access to the converts' perspective have been declared futile due to a supposed lack of self-narratives of conversion to Islam; however, recent research suggests that this assumption is unfounded.[44] In this respect, Ottoman manuscript libraries and especially collections of miscellanies (*mecmuas*) belonging to various named and unnamed individuals represent a treasure trove of texts that can introduce a researcher into the textual world of converts and result in the discovery of various self-narratives of conversion and individual understandings of the phenomenon. Studying the interplay between Muslim and non-Muslim literary and folk genres, as well as interfaces between the Arabic, Turkish, and Persian languages and script on the one hand and various local languages and scripts on the other, resulting in various *aljamiado* phenomena, is another fascinating avenue of research under the larger rubrics of the conversion and spread of Islam.[45] Art and architectural history, along with narrative sources, also promise to yield new insights into conversion and self-fashioning.[46] A braver engagement with narrative, architectural and art sources should therefore be high on the agenda of the future researchers. This kind of research would contribute to our understanding of conversion not only as a socio-economic but also as a narrative, socio-linguistic, aesthetic, spiritual, and intellectual phenomenon—something that is sorely lacking in traditional historiography.

An equally important and urgent dialogue is needed between Muslim and non-Muslim sources. Although this is an obvious research imperative and one in which many scholars engaged in the past, rare are the studies that demonstrate how such a dialogue can be established in a methodologically sound and productive way.[47] A recent important example is Rossitsa Gradeva's article that sets up a dialogue between Ottoman court records relating to cases of coerced conversion to Islam and Orthodox Christian neomartyrologies that both showcase elements of the Ottoman legal system and demonstrate how they

[44] See Krstić, "Illuminated by the Light of Islam".

[45] For this approach in another geo-political context see Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

[46] See, for instance, Zeynep Yürekli, "Legend and Architecture"; Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/ Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009).

[47] Numerous studies by Machiel Kiel focusing on conversion in specific cities or regions of Ottoman Rumeli are certainly one good example. See, for instance, Machiel Kiel, "Razprostranenie na Isliama v balgarskoto selo prez Osmanskata epokha (XV–XIIIv.): kolonizatsiia i Isliamizatsiia", in *Miusiulmanskata Kultura po Balgarskite Zemi*, edited by Rossitsa Gradeva and Svetlana Ivanova (Sofia, IMIR, 1998), pp. 56–125.

were perceived and engaged with from two different communal perspectives.[48] A similar path was recently taken by several Greek Ottomanists who, treading in the footsteps of Elisabeth Zachariadou's seminal article on Orthodox Christian neomartyrs, used neomartyrologies in conjunction with Ottoman sources in an effective way to capture the contested nature of the process of Sunnitization and conversion and expose the ideological agenda of the sources through their juxtaposition.[49] In my own work I have also tried to extend this source dialogue between Orthodox Christian neomartyrologies and Ottoman sources to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Western European martyrological literature (introduced by missionaries to the Ottoman Empire).[50] In this way competing religious agendas within the Orthodox Christian community come to the fore, and light is shed on the politics of conversion from the perspective of the community "losing" members and trying to define its own orthodoxy in reaction to the processes of confession building and articulation of orthodoxy in other communities, both Muslim and Christian. Exploration of the Safavid, Armenian and Jewish sources promises to yield further insights into the cross-communal politics of conversion and the role of the individual, the family and the group in the process.

Another desideratum for future research is to challenge the notion that the process of conversion to Islam in the Ottoman Empire is a *sui generis* phenomenon that cannot be compared to other non-Muslim contexts. If comparisons to other contexts are made in the existing scholarship, they invoke almost exclusively earlier Muslim polities and practices of conversion, thereby perpetuating the notion of conversion to Islam as an unchanging, stable phenomenon. And yet, the growing literature, by Europeanists and Middle East historians alike, on converts, captives and other cultural intermediaries that has deeply eroded the Orientalist notion of clear-cut religious and cultural boundaries in the early modern Mediterranean suggests that conversion practices in the Ottoman Empire were in a much more intimate dialogue with developments in contemporary Christian polities in Europe than previously acknowledged.[51] Several recent studies suggest that the upward social mobility of converts to Islam and the Ottomans' flexibility in accommodating various

[48] Rossitsa Gradeva, "Apostasy in Rumeli in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century", *Arab Historical Review for Ottoman Studies* 22 (2000): pp. 29–74.

[49] Elisabeth Zachariadou,"The Neomartyr's Message", *Kentro Mikrasiatikon Spoudon* 8 (1990–1991): pp. 51–63 and the special issue of the *Archivum Ottomanicum* 23 (2005/6).

[50] Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, pp. 121–164.

[51] For instance, E. Natalie Rothman, "Becoming Venetian: Conversion and Transformation in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean", *Mediterranean Historical Review* 21, no.1 (2006): pp. 39–75; idem., "Conversion and Convergence in the Venetian-Ottoman Borderlands", *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 41, no. 3 (2011): pp. 601–634; Eric

non-Muslim groups by granting them autonomy in return for performing valuable services forced the Venetians and the Habsburgs to adjust their own policies towards non-citizens and religious non-conformists in order to compete for the services of the population with a particular technological or political know-how, especially in the contact zones between empires.[52] Converts were particularly valued as recruits into the diplomatic, military and commercial corps, which sought to articulate and advance the competing religious, political and economic agendas in the age of increasing confessional and imperial polarization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Recent research thus suggests that one way to expand our analytical field would be to approach the phenomenon of conversion to Islam in the Ottoman Empire within the framework of "connected histories" of state- and confession-building processes in early modern Europe and the Middle East.[53]

In addition to expanding the research perspective laterally—across geographic, imperial and religious boundaries—it is also important to extend it vertically, through time, in order to obviate arbitrary segmentation of phenomena due to the traditional periodization of Ottoman history that has created a sharp division of labor between historians of "early modern" and "late" Ottoman history, with the cut-off point falling somewhere in the eighteenth century, depending on the topic and focus. Although recent studies have come to challenge this traditional periodization and attendant narratives about characteristics of particular "ages" of Ottoman history, when it comes to the study of conversion to Islam, old divisions still apply. However, recent research also suggests promising new avenues of inquiry that could help bridge the existing gap. This is particularly true in the context of research on Catholic

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Dursteler, *Renegade Women: Gender, Identity, and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

[52] For instance, Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Molly Greene, "Trading Identities: the Sixteenth-Century Greek Moment", *A Faithful Sea—The Religious Cultures of the Mediterranean, 1200–1700*, edited by Adnan Husain and K. E. Fleming(Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), pp. 121–148; Gabor Agoston, "Information, Ideology, and Limits of Imperial Policy: Ottoman Grand Strategy in the Context of Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry", in *Early Modern Ottomans—Remapping the Empire*, edited by Virginia Aksan and Daniel Goffman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 75–103; E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering the Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Will Smiley, "The Meanings of Conversion: Treaty Law, State Knowledge, and Religious Identity among Russian Captives in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire", *International History Review* 34:3 (2012): pp. 559–580.

[53] See Krstić, "Illuminated;" idem, *Contested Conversions*; on "connected histories" approach see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Euroasia", *Modern Asia Studies* 31/3 (1997): pp. 735–762.

and Protestant missions to the Ottoman Empire—a field that has experienced an unprecedented resurgence in the last two decades. [54] Although most of the recent studies focus on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (and, less so, on the eighteenth) and postulate a greater engagement with and response to the missionary discourses (Catholic and Protestant) by Ottoman Muslims and Christians in this period, new research reveals important continuities with the developments in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In particular, there is an interesting dialogic and dialectic relationship in terms of Christian and Muslim missionaries' concepts of religious "orthodoxy" and "orthopraxy", strategies of proselytization, and genres of proselytization, although this relationship is informed by different equations of power prior to the eighteenth century.[55] By focusing on these issues, a more coherent and consistent dialogue could be established between the research on the early and late Ottoman Empire when it comes to the phenomena of conversion, varieties of religious discourse and Ottoman Islam.[56]

In addition to bridging chronological divisions within the research on conversion, there are also regional, communal and linguistic chasms within the field of Ottoman studies that impede a more comprehensive discussion of the issue. Of particular importance in this context is setting up a cross-regional dialogue, between, on the one hand, scholarship on Ottoman Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, where various Coptic-, Syriac- and Arab-speaking Christians experienced conversion both to Islam and to various other Christian denominations promoted by Catholic and Protestant missionary activity, and, on the other, scholarship on Ottoman Rumeli and Anatolia, where Greek-, Armenian-, Albanian- and Slavic-speaking Christians dealt with similar challenges at the same time.[57] The study of conversion in the Ottoman Empire could thus move be-

[54] A number of valuable and analytically sophisticated studies on the phenomenon of conversion in the late Ottoman Empire, the correlation between the missionaries' and the Ottoman state's religious policies, and responses to them throughout the empire have been produced in the last few years. See in particular Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Zeynep Türkyılmaz, "Anxieties of conversion: Missionaries, state and heterodox communities in the Late Ottoman Empire", PhD thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 2009, and Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy*.

[55] See in particular Terzioğlu, "Where İlm-i *hal* Meets Cathechism".

[56] For an example of such an approach see Scott Michael Rank, "Disputing Religion, Empire, and Modernity: Christian-Muslim Polemics in the Ottoman Print Sphere, 1861–1915", PhD Thesis, Central European University, 2015.

[57] On conversion and religious dynamics among "Oriental" Christians see in particular Bernard Heyberger, *Les chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique* (Rome: Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 1994); Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Tamer

yond an exclusive emphasis on embracing Islam towards a more synchronic, comparative, and cross-communal analysis of conversion as a cultural, political, religious, sociological and/or anthropological phenomenon.

Unsurprisingly, one of the main obstacles to such a comprehensive approach to the study of conversion in the Ottoman Empire, and thus one of the most important problems to overcome in future research, is modern identity politics. Boundaries of the terms "Muslim" and "Christian" are still all too often imagined as stable, unchanging, and easily translatable into modern ethnic categories. However, if the historiography of the last couple of decades contributes anything to our understanding of religious politics in various periods of Ottoman history it is that the boundaries of the religious communities that inhabited the space of the Empire were constantly defined and redefined in an intense inter-communal dialogue that not only transpired within the confines of the Ottoman realm or the Islamic world but also extended far beyond them. The phenomenon of conversion was a polemical arena for competing state, communal and individual identificatory strategies and practices that grappled with one another within ever changing intra- and inter-imperial matrices of power. Conceptualizing the phenomenon of conversion in the Ottoman period as a sphere of constant competition for defining belonging and exclusion rather than as a process of arriving at stable and bound identities that prefigure modern ethnic categories appears to be one of the key premises from which any future research should depart.

El-Leithy, "Coptic Culture and Conversion in Medieval Cairo, 1293–1524", PhD thesis (Harvard University, 2005); Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*; Febe Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Akram Fouad Khater, *Embracing the Divine: Gender, Passion, and Politics in the Christian Middle East* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011).

Taking Possession of Wallachia: Facts and Interpretations

ANDREI PIPPIDI

The present interest in the first stages and consequences of Ottoman expansion in South-Eastern Europe justifies closer consideration of both the impact of conquest in Wallachia and the various interpretations that historiography attempted when investigating the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the first part of this paper I will present the factual evidence as we can summon it presently, leaving for the second part to explain why past interpretations varied so much according to the position of each historian. Within a century of their emergence, the Romanian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia were compelled to find means to prevent the almost continuous Ottoman offensive from coming closer to the Danube and even to secure their very existence as states. In spite of the permanent competition between Hungary and Poland, two neighbours always eager to acquire Moldavia – and possibly Wallachia too – these principalities succeeded where the Transdanubian Slavic states had failed to: they were able to offer resistance, either passive or active, ultimately achieving what might be called an autonomous existence. Meanwhile, their proximity made it necessary for Moldavia to win back land from Wallachia, to subdue or, at least, to firmly control the twin Romanian state. Nonetheless, as it turned out, it took three and a half centuries until their unification was peacefully realized, while the dependence on the Ottoman Empire lasted, in a weakened form, until the treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji, when suzerainty was practically shared with Russia, but it persisted up to the 1877 war and the Berlin Congress.

By the early fifteenth century, the territory ruled by the prince of Wallachia contained only 14 market towns and 70 villages, if we limit our reckoning to the names mentioned in contemporary documents.[1] An even larger figure is justified for the period between 1352 and 1500: records provide 514 names of rural and urban sites.[2] Modern-day estimates tend to maximize the numbers,

[1] Aurelian Sacerdoţeanu, "Aşezări omeneşti în Ţara Românească pînă la 1418," *Arhiva Românească* 7 (1941): pp. 89–110.

[2] Ion Donat, "Aşezările omeneşti din Ţara Românească în secolele XIV–XVI," *Studii*, 9 (1956): pp. 75–95, pp. 76–77. In 1445, a Western witness saw Wallachia as a "grant et spacieux pays,

resulting in about 3,000 villages and towns.[3] Scholars have hesitated to propose precise figures for the inhabitants of those areas; the archeological evidence is yet to provide significant insights in this regard. The demographic problem has to be studied, then, from a variety of perspectives taking into account the effects of continuous warfare.[4] It is certain that, the interventions of Ottoman armies undeniably had a disastrous impact on the population of the region. While the lineaments of Bayezid's and Mehmed I's strategy do not emerge clearly enough, it is known that the prime aim of their campaigns was to reach the Lower Danube and to extend the northernmost frontier beyond Dobrogea, where a former Byzantine despotate, which the prince of Wallachia had taken for himself, could not resist the vigorous invasion of the Ottoman army.[5]

During an initial period of about twenty-five years, beginning at the time of the Kosovo and Nikopol battles, the Wallachians were successful in preventing

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mal peuplé en aulcunes marches," cf. Nicolae Iorga (ed.), "Cronica lui Wavrin şi românii," *Buletinul comisiei istorice a României* 6 (1927): pp. 57–148, p. 136.

[3] Dinu C. Giurescu, Ţara Românească în secolele XIV–XV, (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1973), 27. The estimates of Louis Roman, "Populaţia Ţării Româneşti în secolele XIV–XV", *Revista de istorie* 7 (1986): pp. 669–684, are exaggerated.

[4] Barbu Câmpina, *Scrieri istorice,* (Bucharest: Editura Acadademiei RSR, 1973), p. 255, fn. 21. For instance, in 1377 the number of Venetian coats of arms needed for the Wallachian army was estimated at 10,000 and the same figure, 10,000 "knights", is mentioned in 1430 in relation to Moldavia.

[5] It's a matter which has been endlessly discussed since 1937, when N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor, Vol. III,* (Vălenii de Munte: Datina Românească, 1937), pp. 289, 291, suggested that Mircea went to Dobrogea in 1389–1390 in connection with Bayezid. The versions of this episode proposed by Anca Ghiaţă, "Condiţiile instaurării dominaţiei otomane în Dobrogea," *Studii istorice sud-est europene* 1 (1974): pp. 43–126, and Sergiu Iosipescu, *Balica, Dobrotiţă,Ioancu,* (Bucharest: Editura Militară , 1985), are probably misleading. The most authoritative interpretations are those by Răzvan Theodorescu, "Un însemn sculptat şi pictat de la Cozia (în jurul „despotiei" lui Mircea cel Bătrîn)," *Studii şi cercetări de istoria artei, seria arta plastică* 16: 2 (1969): pp. 191–208, and Tahsin Gemil, "Mircea l'Ancien face à la politique impériale de Bayézid," *Revue roumaine d'histoire* 25: 1–2 (1986): pp. 3–21. My own opinion is that the 1389 alliance between Genoa and Bayezid made Ivanko, with whom Genoa signed a treaty, an associate of the Turks. Ivanko's mysterious disappearance provided Mircea with an opportunity to take his place. On Mircea's title of "despot" see, although I feel impelled to express strong doubts, Constantin Rezachevici, " 'Despotia' lui Mircea cel Bătrîn – o problemă de titulatură: între realitate şi ficţiune," *Revista arhivelor* 48 (1986): pp. 11–32, p. 32. The view I hold is that "terrarum Dobrodicii despotus", as Mircea entitled himself in 1390–1391, is perfectly analogous to the title of Carlo II Tocco in South Epiros: "dominus Despotatus", cf. Donald M.Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros, 1267–1479. A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Another explanation seems less probable: the title could have been granted by John VII during his brief reign, in 1390. On the close relationship of this Byzantine emperor with the Genoese and the Ottomans, see Ivan Djurić, *Le crépuscule de Byzance,* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1996), pp. 24–25, 73–74, 104–105.

the occupation of their lands beyond the Danube. Moreover, Mircea of Wallachia, unbroken by Bayezid's attacks, rallied behind the king of Hungary, whom he would soon join at Nikopol. Later, he even became involved in the fights for the sultan's heritage.[6] There then came a chaotic period of struggle among Mircea's descendants, whose ambition to rule made them alternately campaign against the Turks and the Hungarians.[7] Hungary, as long as it was joined to Poland by a personal union under King Władysław I and III (1440–1444), won several battles that inspired confidence in the future of Constantinople. After the crash of the Varna crusade, John Hunyadi, a military genius whose last victory was the relief of the besieged Belgrade, imposed his authority over Wallachia and Moldavia, where he garrisoned the main strongholds and was regarded as protector of their rulers.[8] Pressure for Crimean Tatars eventually forced the payment of Moldavian tribute to the conqueror of Constantinople staring with the summer of 1945.[9]

The situation of *tribute payer*, which had already been accepted by some Wallachian princes during the turbulent and disorderly period that followed Mircea's death, allowed them to buy a peace-agreement with the Porte. This compromise was abruptly broken in 1461 by Vlad the Impaler, but, after the fierce clashes of the following year, was resumed by Radu the Hand-

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[6] Şerban Papacostea, "La Valachie et la crise de structure de l'Empire ottoman (1402–1413)," *Revue roumaine d'histoire* 25 :1–2 (1986) : pp. 23–33. See also Ilie Minea, *Principatele române şi politica orientală a împăratului Sigismund,note istorice,* Bucharest: Convorbiri Literare, 1919, and Şerban Papacostea, "Din nou cu privire la politica orientală a lui Sigismund de Luxemburg, (1412)," in *Ştefan Meteş la 85 de ani,* (Cluj-Napoca: Direcţia Generală a Arhivelor Statului, 1977), pp. 243–246.

[7] Alexandru A.Vasilescu, *Urmaşii lui Mircea cel Bătrîn pînă la Vlad Ţepeş, 1418–1456. Vol I: De la moartea lui Mircea cel Bătrîn pînă la Vlad Dracul, 1418–1437,* (Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1915).

[8] Adrian Andrei Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara şi românii din vremea lui,* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1999); Francisc Pall, "Le condizioni e gli echi internazionali della lotta antiottomana del 1442–1443, condotta da Giovanni di Hunedoara," *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 3: 3–4 (1965) pp. 433–463; id., "Relazioni di Giovanni di Hunedoara con l'Italia negli anni 1452–1453," *ibid.* 13: 3–4 (1975): pp. 453–478, 559–594; id., "Stăpînirea lui Iancu de Hunedoara asupra Chiliei şi problema ajutorării Bizanţului," and "Byzance à la veille de sa chute et Janco de Hunedoara (Hunyad)", both articles in the author's collected studies *Românii şi cruciada târzie,* edited by Ionuţ Costea, (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2003), pp. 186–248.

[9] Matei Cazacu, "L'impact ottoman sur les Pays Roumains et ses incidences monétaires (1452–1504)," *Revue roumaine d'histoire* 12:1 (1973): pp. 159–192; id., "De nouveau sur le rôle international de la Moldavie dans la seconde moitié du XVe siècle," *Revue des études roumaines* 16 (1981): pp. 36–39; Şerban Papacostea, "Moldova, stat tributar al Imperiului otoman în secolul al XV-lea: cadrul internaţional al raporturilor stabilite în 1455–1456," in id., *Evul Mediu românesc, realităţi politice şi curente spirituale,* (Bucharest: Corint, 2001), pp. 109–126.

some.[10] As long as Stephen the Great reigned in Moldavia, Wallachia could keep this allegiance to the Porte only during the short intervals of peace between Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire.[11] From the end of the fifteenth century, payment of the tribute restored the peace for twenty-five years before the Ottoman warrior elite of the Danube frontier became thoroughly involved in the fights among various pretenders to the Wallachian throne. Faced with the threat of seeing their country disappear as a state, with a pasha placed over them instead of the prince, the Wallachians offered such firm resistance that the sultan recognised their ruler, Radu of Afumaţi, as a vassal in 1524. Radu intended to reopen the struggle with the support he would have gained from the new king of Hungary, Ferdinand of Habsburg, but his own boyars betrayed and killed him.[12] The defeat of Mohács and the subsequent division of Hungarian forces left no opportunities to pursue the anti-Ottoman war. Those who had died "for the Christian faith" had their names inscribed in the necrologies of their religious foundations,[13] but their successors understood the necessity of a different policy. Or, if not, they disappeared. The reign of Mircea the Shepherd began in 1545 by a massacre of boyars (two hundred of them, according to one source) and this was a clear sign of change.[14] From then on, subordination to the Porte would remain uninterrupted for half a century, when Michael the Brave raised the standard of rebellion. Tribute, when not excessive – as it would become in the second half of the century[15] – suited the interests of the ruling class because it bought the territory the strategic status of a buffer zone.

This brief survey of the facts may serve as an introduction to my account of the search for their interpretation. Only towards the end shall I return to some

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[10] Ştefan Andreescu, *Vlad Ţepeş (Dracula).Între legendă şi adevăr istoric,* (Bucharest: Editura Minerva, 1998).

[11] Şerban Papacostea, "Relaţiile internaţionale ale Moldovei în vremea lui Ştefan cel Mare," in *Evul Mediu românesc,* pp. 148–168; Ştefan S. Gorovei, Maria Magdalena Szekely, *Princeps omni laude maior. O istorie a lui Ştefan cel Mare,* (Putna: Muşatinii, 2005), pp. 74–76, 79, 81, 93–107, 152, 160–168, 187–209.

[12] Teodor Palade, *Radu de la Afumaţi,* (Bucharest: Fundaţia Regele Carol I, 1939); Horia I. Ursu, *Moldova în contextul politic european (1517–1527),* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1972), pp. 101–116. Cf. Costin Feneşan, "Legământul lui Radu de la Afumaţi faţă de Habsburgi. Semnificaţii şi urmări," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie şi Arheologie din Cluj-Napoca* 23 (1980): pp. 383–395.

[13] Ştefan Andreescu, "Boierii lui Radu vodă de la Afumaţi (Observaţii asupra pomelnicului mănăstirii Argeşului)," in id., *Perspective medievale,* (Bucharest: Nemira, 2002), pp. 24–74.

[14] Id., "La politique de Mircea le Pâtre," *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 9 :1 (1972): pp. 115–122. See also id., "Portretele murale de la Snagov şi Tismana," in *Perspective medievale,* pp.112–136.

[15] Mihai Berza, "Haraciul Moldovei şi Ţării Româneşti în sec. XV–XIX," *Studii şi materiale de istorie medie* 2 (1957): pp. 7–47, pp. 30–35. Cf. Mihai Maxim, *O istorie a relaţiilor româno-otomane, cu documente noi din arhivele turceşti,* I, (Brăila: Editura Istros, 2012), pp. 76–79.

facts, less known or misinterpreted, which need to be stressed with persuasive arguments. The Romantic poet Grigore Alexandrescu, writing in 1840, after a visit to the monastery of Cozia in Wallachia, where Mircea is buried, was the first to profess national enthusiasm when contemplating the haunted ruins.[16] Mircea was also evoked by Mihai Eminescu, and that great poet expressed then the same doctrine that we find in his journalism, where he aimed pointed criticisms at his contemporaries, while the ancestors were exalted as icons of courage and patriotism.[17] That heroic past was summoned in 1877–1878, under the impression of the war in Bulgaria, which resulted in Romanian independence. Dressing them in the armour of the crusaders allowed a national myth to emerge.

If one were to ask where this image of medieval Romanians came from, its origin should be ascribed to another Moldavian poet, Gheorghe Asachi, whose literary education had been supplied by Italian historical novels and by that bard of Russian history, Nikolay Karamzin.[18] Asachi's daughter married Edgar Quinet and the French republican historian got from her an infatuation with the Romanians: after the end of the Crimean War he defended their right to a proper place among the European nations.[19] The other leading historian of the French left, Michelet, was surrounded from 1848 onwards by exiled revolutionaries, from whom he learned Romanian stories which he cast in a grand literary form.[20] Under the influence of such masters, N.Bălcescu, himself a

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[16] Grigore Alexandrescu, *Opere,* edited by I. Fischer, (Bucharest: Minerva, 1957), pp. 71–73, 418–420.

[17] Mihai Eminescu, *Opere, Vol. IX–XIII: Publicistică,* edited by Perpessicius [Dimitrie S. Panaitescu], (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1980–1989).

[18] Gheorghe Asachi, *Opere,* II, edited by N.A. Ursu, (Bucharest: Minerva, 1981), with an extensive bibliography. The volume includes *Nouvelles historiques de la Moldo-Roumanie,* Iaşi: Institut de l'Abeille, 1859. On Asachi, see Eugen Lovinescu, *Gheorghe Asachi – viaţa şi opera lui,* (Bucharest: Editura Casei Şcoalelor, 1927); Marin Aiftincă, Alexandru Husar (eds.), *Gheorghe Asachi,* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1992).

[19] Edgar Quinet, *Oeuvres complètes, Vol. VI: Les Roumains. Allemagne et Italie. Mélanges,* (Paris: Pagnerre, 1857). The speech by Quinet at the funeral of his stepson (George Morousi, 1840–1856) is to be found in a volume published "as a token of gratitude of the Romanian people to our great friend at his commemoration": the translation into Romanian of *Histoire de mes idées* by Loreta Bogza and Alexandrina Vornicelu, with a preface by N. Iorga (*1815 şi 1840. Istoria ideilor mele,* Vălenii de Munte: Datina Românească, 1927). In 1869 Quinet had been honoured with membership of the new Romanian Academy. Cf. his commemoration by N. Iorga, *Portrete şi comemorări,* Bucharest: (Editura Librăriei "Universala" Alcalay & Co, 1936), pp. 259–272.

[20] Jules Michelet, *La Pologne martyr. Russie—Danube,* (Paris: Dente/ Brussels, Leipzig: Lacroix, 1863). See also Jules Michelet, *Légendes démocratiques du Nord,* edited by Michel Cadot, (Paris: PUF, 1968). Cf. Ion Breazu, *Michelet şi românii,* (Cluj: Cartea Românească, 1935); Marin Bucur, *Documente inedite din arhivele franceze privitoare la români în sec. al XIX-lea,*

political exile, attempted the description of a key figure of Romanian history, Michael the Brave. The union of Wallachia with Transylvania and Moldavia had been briefly effected by Michael in 1600. That important episode in the wars against the Turks would be blown from an accident into a gesture of national deed by the following generations of Romanian intellectuals up to 1918. Of course, Nicolae Bălcescu had incomplete access to medieval records; he stated that "the Romanian army was the first permanent army in Europe."[21] Thus he wrote of the "glorious wars of Mircea, Stephen, Hunyadi, wars fought for independence and religion against the barbarous and fanatical Islam, ceaseless struggles where the Romanians, with their weapons covered with laurels, bravely defended Christendom". He stated: "Our Wallachia was never subdued by the sword, she was admitted by her good will to the protection of the Turks". When did it happen? In 1393. Bălcescu believed it because he relied on a false document.[22] Later, when the state of historical studies in Romania increasingly improved in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, there entered a writer of great authority, Alexandru D. Xenopol, author of the first history of Romania, a work which circulated abroad in French translation. In the absence of much evidence about the earliest confrontations with the Turks, the chapters on Mircea and his descendants are the most confused of his considerable work. The turning points he suggests are 1391–1392 for the first tribute paid by Wallachia, as a result of the defeat at Kosovo, then, after Rovine and Nikopol, a second agreement with Bayezid,[23] in terms more or less like those reported by Fotino, a strenuous compiler of old chronicles. In the *Chronology of Universal History* he wrote for high schools, Xenopol preferred 1396 as the date when Wallachia became tributary to the Turks.[24] His historical narrative would be conserved for a long time. It consists of two features running through the entire past of the Romanians: a permanent struggle against any foreign domination and insistent efforts to pursue the unity of the fatherland. Dimitrie Onciul, whose Austrian education gave him a more cautious approach, had his own, perfectly justifiable view of national history: as he said in 1899, "the origins of the Romanian state can be understood only

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Vol. I, (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1969); id., *Jules Michelet şi revoluţionarii români*, (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1982).

[21] Nicolae. Bălcescu, *Opere, Vol. I: Scrieri istorice, politice şi economice 1844–1847*, edited by G. Zane, Elena G. Zane, (Bucharest: Editura Acadamiei RSR, 1974), p. 50.

[22] Id., *Opere, Vol. II: Scrieri istorice, politice şi economice 1848–1852*, (Bucharest: Editura Acadamiei RSR, 1982), p. 8.

[23] Alexandru D. Xenopol, *Istoria Românilor din Dacia Traiană, Vol. IV*, (Iaşi: Editura „Librăria Şcoalelor"–„Fraţii Şaraga", 1896), pp. 82–83. Xenopol could not vouch for the authenticity of that document or its date (between 1412 and 1418?).

[24] Id., *Cronologia raţională a istoriei universale*, (Iaşi: H. Goldner 1878), pp. 122–123.

in relation to the historical development in the Balkan Peninsula and under its influence".[25] Therefore, Onciul's account of the events which determined the "capitulation", as he called it, is precise and supported by a number of incontestable documents: Mircea, successful at Rovine in 1394, suffered a bad blow near the Argeş river, countered a new Turkish raid on the left bank of the Danube in 1395, and refused to pay tribute at least until 1402.[26]

A further application of the critical method brought Constantin Giurescu to doubt there has even been any "capitulation".[27] Something had gone wrong in 1772, when, before the Austrian, Russian and Prussian delegates at the Congress of Focşani, who were expected to provide evidence for the old autonomy of both Principalities, the Wallachian boyars displayed their documents. These were: a first privilege granted to Mircea, a second allegiance into which Basarab Laiotă had come (1477?), notes about several confirmations of previous settlements and the story of how these precious treaties had fallen into oblivion. Giurescu's analysis of such documents further taken into consideration at Kuçuk-Kainardji confirmed what had already been foreseen since 1902 and demonstrated in 1905 by Nicolae Iorga: the apocryphal character of those texts.[28] "Fälschungen" was the sentence pronounced in Iorga's *Geschichte des Rumänischen Volkes im Rahmen seiner Staatsbildungen* , a work he wrote for his former teacher Karl Lamprecht.[29] As for the history of Wallachia's relations with the Porte, it received great momentum through the enormous quantity of documents published by Iorga in the following years. Another of his classical works, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches nach der Quellen dargestellt,* enlarged the picture by its awareness of context diversity across the Ottoman state. It introduced a much-needed balance between the simplified image of absolutism and corruption and the more diverse cultural imports from the Ottoman

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[25] Dimitrie Onciul, *Scrieri istorice. Vol. I,* edited by Aurelian Sacerdoţeanu, (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1968), p. 561.

[26] Ibid., *Vol. II*, pp. 256–258, and id., *Din istoria României,* (Bucharest: Editura Librariei "Alcalay," 1914), pp. 36–38, 39–41. A peaceful agreement would have been concluded in 1402.

[27] Constantin Giurescu, *Capitulaţiile Moldovei cu Poarta otomană,* (Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1908), pp. 25–26, 58. The old and popular belief in capitulations produced the text composed in 1769–1774, cf. *Istoria politică şi geografică a Ţerei Romanesci,* (Bucharest: Typographia Naţională a lui Stephan Rassidescu, 1863), known as the Tunusli Brothers' history (Greek edition in 1806, translated into Romanian by George Sion).

[28] N. Iorga, as editor of *Genealogia Cantacuzinilor de Banul Mihai Cantacuzino,* (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice şi Editura Minerva, 1902), pp. 68–69. The first rejection of the treatise as "falsely dated, in an unusual form and perhaps entirely invented" is declared by id., "Cum se predă istoria în şcolile noastre. Cu ocasia unui nou manual," *Convorbiri literare* 30 (1900), pp. 55–56.

[29] Id., *Geschichte des rumänischen Volkes im Rahmen seiner Staatsbildungen, Vol. II,* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1905), pp. 76–77.

world preserved by non-Muslim populations.[30] The conditions of a contract concluded with the sultan by a community wishing to be spared the violence of conquest are stipulated in the chart granted by Mehmed II to Pera, which was published by Iorga in 1914.[31] We must add that such progress in the interpretation of Ottoman history was considerably helped by his witnessing the fall of the Old Regime in Constantinople. After the end of regional conflicts in the Balkans, Iorga founded the first Institute for the study of South-Eastern Europe (in Bucharest in 1914).[32]

A comprehensive examination of the circumstances that brought about Wallachia's loss of independence is provided by Petre P. Panaitescu. A Slavist, he devoted many years to editing documents and the book he wrote on Mircea in 1943 rested on this detailed investigation of the sources.[33] Although one encounters some biased opinions in the work, he succeeded in creating a sound critical apparatus despite a patchwork of legend and rumour which had too often been taken for facts. The dates recorded by Ottoman chroniclers are, as specialists know, difficult to make sense of. For Panaitescu, things are clear: before 1417 Mircea never paid the *gizye* mentioned by Ottoman sources. Such an indefinable and brittle pact could be ascribed only to Vlad, who replaced Mircea in 1394–1396, under the protection of the sultan. The precise nature of the events of 1417–1420 is poorly understood. In an article written when his country was fighting against the Soviet invasion, Panaitescu tried to answer the question of "Why did the Turks not conquer the Romanian Lands?".[34] According to Panaitescu, there were two reasons: because the main road from Istanbul to Buda and Vienna via Belgrade skirted around Wallachia, and because the Ottoman treasury found it easier to charge the local administration with the task of collecting the money and natural riches.

The Oriental question of the Middle Ages was treated by Gheorghe I. Brătianu in his *La Mer Noire. Des origines* à la conquête ottomane, a work likewise conceived during the war, but published posthumously. The historian envisaged the problem in the broad framework of the Black Sea region, where

[30] A. Pippidi, "A propos d'un livre centenaire," *The Historical Review/La Revue historique* 3 (2006): 217–226. See also Maria Matilda Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, *Nicolae Iorga – a Romanian historian of the Ottoman Empire,* (Bucharest: Publishing House of the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania, 1972).

[31] N. Iorga, "Le privilège de Mahomed II pour la ville de Péra (1er juin 1453)", *Bulletin de la Section historique de l'Académie Roumaine* 1 (1914): pp. 11–32.

[32] A. Pippidi, "Pour l'histoire du premier Institut des études sud-est européennes en Roumanie," *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 16 :1 (1978): pp. 139–156.

[33] P.P. Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrîn,* (Bucharest [1943]).

[34] Id., *Interpretări românești,* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1994), pp. 111–118.

the actors were not only the medieval states situated on both banks of the Danube, but also the besieged Byzantine Empire, Venice and Genoa. Brătianu believed that the Dobroudja and Silistra had been seized from Mircea by the Turks since 1393. Vlad is viewed to have been the first prince of Wallachia to pay tribute to the sultan without any immediate consequences. The end of Mircea's reign was seen as the threshold after which Wallachia entered under Ottoman political influence.[35] Brătianu was right to observe that, during the first half of the fifteenth century, the strife between various pretenders to the Wallachian throne continued the conflict between Hungary and the Ottoman Empire that had already existed in the days of Bayezid and Sigismund. By dealing with these events in their European context Brătianu was able to paint a large and complex picture: it helps us to understand why the loss of the Moldavian ports in 1484 brought the final taming of Wallachia.

Under the Communist regime, which kept Romanian historiography under strict surveillance, some evidence on the confrontation with the Turks was compiled in scrupulous studies, but we must refer here only to the authors who undertook broad works drawing together a large amount of material concerning the Ottoman expansion in our region. The first is Barbu Câmpina, whose Marxist understanding of the relation between power and economy formed the rigid frame of his interpretation. He managed to rectify the account of the face-to-face between Bayezid and the Wallachians: after the Turks had been defeated at Rovine in 1394, Vlad the Usurper offered nothing more than gifts. The first *haraç* of Wallachia was paid by Mircea to Mehmed I, if Câmpina is right in presuming that it was nothing more than an alliance agreement and that it was concluded in 1415.[36] A new overview of the links binding the Romanian principalities to the Ottoman Empire came from M. Berza.[37] He chose to investigate the role of the financial obligations to the Porte in the economy of both countries, but from his work, left unfinished, he published only studies on the evolution of the *haraç* and other obligations from the fifteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth. The sources employed for this capital survey are Romanian and external, but do not include Turkish ones. Since the last years of Mircea's reign, the payments were often stopped, but on the eve of the 1461–62 war the tribute had reached the

[35] Georges I. Bratianu, *La mer Noire. Des origines à la conquête ottomane,* (Munich: Societatea Academică Română, 1969). The last chapter of this posthumously published work deals with the Ottoman conquest from 1421 to 1484.

[36] Barbu Câmpina, *Scrieri istorice,* has provided a critical re-evaluation of many previous assumptions.

[37] Berza, "Haraciul Moldovei şi Ţării Româneşti." Cf. id., "Variaţiile exploatării Ţării Româneşti de către Poarta otomană în sec. XVI–XVII," *Studii* 11:2 (1958): pp. 59–72.

sum of 10,000 golden coins. Its maximal growth was reached in 1593: it escalated to the point of 155, 000 golden coins, before the revolt led by Michael the Brave. Among the drafts left by Berza there are also some of his lectures at the Collège de France, where he offered a coherent description of historical situations that are still only superficially known or indeed misunderstood outside of Romania.

The problem of the conditions of submission to the Porte has been further examined since Şerban Papacostea began to pursue a direction previously opened by his master, G. Brătianu. Many of his studies, always based on new evidence, have analysed the international context of Romanian politics in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, explaining the causes of its ups and downs. The Genoese and Venetian presence in the Black Sea, as well as the whimsical ambitions of King Sigismund of Hungary, occupy a great place in that reconstruction of Wallachia's attempts to counter the Ottoman threat by creating alliances. From all this ample work still in development, of which we are the grateful witnesses, it will be enough to mention here the study on the first treaties concluded by Wallachia and Moldavia with the Ottoman Empire. It provides insights into a vast body of documentary material, which is supporting the assertion that the Romanian lands did not renounce their autonomy. For instance, the conclusion drawn in 1490 by Filippo Buonaccorsi, a well informed adviser of the king of Poland, was: "non ut victi,sed tanquam victores pactionibus decederunt".[38]

A further demonstration of this view and, at the same time, a meticulous account of the variations of the tribute, have been undertaken by M. Maxim on the basis of Ottoman archives. Throughout the sixteenth century, the figures of the growing duties towards the Porte are accompanied by statements about some former *ahdnames* presumed as confirmations of the autonomy. In 1522 Wallachia came very close to being transformed into a paşalık, but, after two years of fighting, the Turks agreed to a *foedus in antiquis conditionibus*. In 1519, 1577, 1585 and even, as an appeasement to Michael the Brave, 1599, special diplomas were delivered to princes of Wallachia which granted self-rule. Collecting several such confirmations of previous settlements, Maxim has set himself the task of proving that privileged status. During the last thirty years, his range of books have hammered the reader with such

[38] Şerban Papacostea, "Tratatele Ţării Româneşti şi Moldovei cu Imperiul otoman în secolele XIV–XVI, ficţiune politică şi realitate istorică", in *Stat, societate, naţiune. Interpretări istorice,*edited by Nicolae Edroiu, Aurel Răduţiu, Pompiliu Teodor, (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1982), pp. 93–106. See also id., "Bizanţul şi cruciata la Dunărea de Jos la sfîrşitul secolului al XV-lea," in id., *Evul Mediu,* pp. 47–70.

arguments.[39] However, to this day, we still await the discovery of an original *ahdname* which would provide the final proof to this bulky file. All the invoked pieces reflect either the point of view of the Romanians who had political objectives in mind, or the witnessing of Western observers, whose knowledge was usually acquired from indirect sources.

The juridical aspect of the problem has also been discussed by Maxim, who summed up the increasing subjugation of Wallachia in three stages, inaugurated in 1462, 1524 and 1545. In Maxim's vision, the compromise reached between Wallachia and the Ottoman Empire was founded upon the following main points: maintaining a Christian prince, elected in the country from the local dynasty and confirmed by the sultan, observing "the rights and liberties of old" without any Ottoman interference, paying the *haraç* and various *peskes*, being a "friend to the friends and enemy to the enemies" of the Porte in exchange for the protection granted, and also securing some advantages for the Wallachian merchants. We must observe that there is a contradiction between Maxim's belief in the existence of official franchises and the ordinary practice of the Ottoman power, which was reluctant to grant such concessions, as is acknowledged by experts on Islamic law.

The scenario proposed by Tahsin Gemil places the question in the wider framework of Islamic law and its conclusion is that the treatises were bilateral contracts of alliance and submission.[40] Concerning the relations between Mircea and Bayezid, Gemil is not inclined to admit more than a settlement of mutual neutrality, even without having had a written form. Only during the reign of Süleyman the Lawgiver, whose answer to every challenge was 'war', when the power base of Romanian rulers was weakened and when the Hungarian support disappeared, did the sultan strengthened his authority. While Moldavia was also isolated from Poland and lost to the Tatars its South-Eastern region (Budjak), the Turks established their military control on the left bank of the Danube. From then on, Wallachia remained under Ottoman suzerainty.

Recently, Viorel Panaite, who teaches Ottoman history at Bucharest University, published the second edition of his book on war, peace and commerce

[39] Mihai Maxim, *Ţările Române şi Înalta Poartă: cadrul juridic al relaţiilor româno-otomane în evul mediu,* with a preface by Halil Inalcik, (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1993); id., *O istorie a relaţiilor.*

[40] Tahsin Gemil, *Românii şi otomanii în secolele XIV–XVI,* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1991). The same author did little more than summarise the effect of the relative decline of the Ottoman Empire during the seventeenth century on relations with the Romanian principalities. See also id., "Considérations sur les rapports politiques roumano-ottomans au XVIIe siècle," *Revue roumaine d'histoire* 15:4 (1976): pp. 653–667and id., Ţările Române în contextul politic internaţional, 1621–1672, (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1979).

in Islamic law.[41] He showed considerable interest in Ottoman references to the ideology of the *djihad* and in the signification of the 'capitulations', according to tradition or custom. The author strives to recognize, behind the diplomatic strategies, the usual duties and rights of tributary princes like those of Wallachia. Apart from discussing very general rules of Muslim law, Panaite emphasizes the fact that the charters did not have lasting value, except if they were renewed – therefore, they cannot be considered peace treaties. In the first edition of his book, fifteen years ago, he was less sceptical about the amount of autonomy conferred upon the Romanian principalities.[42] Today, Wallachia and Moldavia are seen as provinces within the Ottoman Empire. It is the most striking conclusion of this work and it is deduced only from the principles of Islamic law applied to international relations. A few years ago, the same author stepped forward in this controversy by criticising "the myth of crucial episodes": either chroniclers or modern historians assigned the submission to some precise date.[43]. Panaite's last word, in a recent collection of essays,[44] asserts again that Wallachia was *conquered* and regarded as such by the Ottoman government under Süleyman. This sultan himself declared in 1531 that the Wallachian ruler was his "slave and tribute-payer". Autonomy was a notion unknown to Islamic law. Long-term treaties were never concluded between the Ottoman Empire and the Danubian principalities. The ambiguity created by the difference with the Romanian understanding of the vassalage should however be kept in mind. The variability of power relations proves that those who determined policy on both sides were acting under internal pressure from their own elites. They obviously differed in the way they understood why they acted as they did.

In a field where the labourers have been many, but the harvest relatively poor, we approach the end of this guide to the bibliography on the subject. We must still add the book by Marian Coman on the borders of medieval Wallachia, which was issued in 2013. The originality of this work lies in its turning upside down the traditional theory about a territorial state that from its outset extended to the

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[41] Viorel Panaite, *Război, pace şi comerţ în Islam. Ţările romîne şi dreptul otoman al popoarelor,* (Bucharest: Polirom, 2013).

[42] Id., *Pace, război şi comerţ în Islam. Ţările române şi dreptul otoman al popoarelor. Secolele XV–XVII,* (Bucharest: ALL, 1997). See also id., *The Ottoman Law of War and Peace. The Ottoman Empire and Tribute Payers,* (Boulder–New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

[43] Id., "From allegiance to conquest. Ottomans and Moldo-Wallachians from the late fourteenth to the mid-sixteenth centuries (I)," *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 48 (2010): pp. 211–231.

[44] Id., "*The Legal and Political Status of Wallachia and Moldavia in Relation to the Ottoman Porte,*" in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, edited* by Gábor Kármán, Lovro Kuncević, (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 9–43.

frontiers we know from our modern history. The author argues that until the mid-sixteenthth century, the princes gradually extended their judicial and fiscal power by grabbing social communities with their resources rather than territories. The result was achieved in about two centuries, during the evolution of a socio-political unity. This totally new scenario supposes that the fiscal pressure of the Porte consolidated the power of the prince within the country. Therefore, as much as Wallachia was economically integrated into the Ottoman Empire, centralization advanced. Looking at Wallachia as a conglomeration of lands, Coman carefully rethinks the situation of Podunavia, an extra-Danubian territory taken by Mircea in 1389, after the Kosovo defeat. Among the sites on the Danubian border, the records used by Coman concern Brăila as a large commercial center, Silistra, a much disputed gateway seized by Mircea in 1403, Giurgiu, where the Turks settled in 1417, Vidin, occupied by Vladislav I in 1369, when the first encounter with the Turks took place, and the strongholds of Turnu and Nikopol.[45]

The Ottoman Empire was an agglomeration of nations of various races and cultures. It embraced principalities whose political interests were opposed to each other, or who were also bound to other states, generating highly complex and unpredictable situations. Having presented the main contributions to the topic, it would be unfair to avoid assuming my own responsibility for a reconstruction of the facts. I shall confine myself to a few unsettled facts which may shed a different light on the Ottoman-Wallachian relationship.

- It should appear that in 1374 the rumours about an alliance of the Turks with Vladislav I, prince of Wallachia, and his presence in Bulgaria, at Nikopol, indicate collusion against the Hungarian penetration in the Balkans.[46]
- The role of Radu I of Wallachia (1374–1383) is discernible in the events of 1377,when the king of Hungary fought a battle against *Radano infedelle,prinzipo de Bulgari*, or even *Radano Turco*.[47]

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[45] Marian Coman, *Putere şi teritoriu. Ţara Românească medievală (secolele XIV–XVI)*, (Iaşi: Polirom, 2013).

[46] Nicolae Constantinescu, *Vladislav I*, (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1979), pp. 145–149, denies the existence of such an alliance. The same document (a letter from the king of Hungary) was underestimated by Maria Holban, "Contribuţii la studiul raporturilor dintre Ţara Românească şi Ungaria angevină (Rolul lui Benedict Himfy în legătură cu problema Vidinului)," *Studii şi materiale de istorie medie* 1 (1959): pp. 7–62, p. 54. Câmpina, *Scrieri istorice*, p. 222, displays the same hesitation to disturb any favourable view of Vladislav. Carmen Laura Dumitrescu, "Le voivode donateur de la fresque de Saint-Nicolae Domnesc (Argeş) et le problème de sa domination sur Vidin au XIVe siècle," *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 17:3 (1979), pp. 541–558, pp. 551, 554, needs to reappraise that information in order to justify the hypothesis of a new occupation of Vidin by the Wallachians in 1374–1377 ("or even 1380"!).

[47] Gheorghe I. Bratianu, "L'expédition de Louis Ier de Hongrie contre le prince de Valachie Radu Ier Basarab en 1377", *Revue historique du Sud-Est européen*, 2:4–6 (1925) pp. 73–82.

- Vladislav's Serbian allies had been Nikola Altomanović of Peć and Radić of Braničevo, enemies of Lazar. Therefore, the presence of the Wallachians in Lazar's camp at Kosovo Polje hardly seems probable.[48] However, Mircea took advantage of the defeat to seize a border region with Serbia for himself.[49] His relations with Stefan Lazarević and the other Serbian rulers need further investigation, because they varied in the following period as they fought either for the Turks or against them.[50]
- Even before the Kosovo battle, when Šišman of Tărnovo was attacked by Stracimir of Vidin, Mircea had joined the latter and occupied a *pyrgos* on the Bulgarian bank, which was seized by the Turks in 1390.[51]
- The incursion of Firuz-beg from Vidin across the Danube in 1390 compelled some local boyars to pay homage and bring gifts.[52]
- 1391 is the date of the reply: Mircea attacked Kavarna, Southern Dobrogea.[53]

See also Maria Holban, "Peut-il être question d'une seconde occupation roumaine de Vidin par Radu Ier?" *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, 18:3 (1980), pp. 443–458

[48] Anca Iancu, "Ştiri despre români în izvoarele istoriografice sîrbeşti (secolele XV–XVII)," in *Studii istorice sud-est europene*, 1 (1974): pp. 7–41, pp.16–17. Only the chronicle of Studenica (dismissed by Iancu as unreliable) reports that the Wallachians accompanied the Turks at Kosovo. N. Iorga alone, in his *Istoria românilor, Vol. III* , pp. 288–289, supposed that Mircea, at the time, may well have been on good terms with the Turks, being motivated by his interests in Dobrogea.

[49] See Coman, *Putere*, pp. 254–256, for the identification of "Podunavia" on the border between Wallachia and Serbia, already suggested by Andrei Pippidi, "Monarhia în Evul Mediu românesc: practică şi ideologie", in *Naţional şi universal în istoria românilor. Studii oferite prof. dr. Şerban Papacostea cu ocazia împlinirii a 70 de ani*, edited by Ovidiu Cristea, Gheorghe Lazăr, (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1998), p. 37.

[50] For instance, Iancu, "Ştiri despre români," pp. 17–18, cites evidence relating to the despot Štefan in 1395 when he fought against Mircea at Rovine, and in 1410, when he welcomed him at Golubac with Sultan Musa. See also Coman, *Putere*, pp. 255–258.

[51] Pyrgos, the Bulgarian Turnu, was taken by the Turks from Mircea (in 1390?), according to Neşri. Cf. Mihail Guboglu, Mustafa Mehmet, *Cronici turceşti privind ţările române. Extrase, Vol. I: Sec. XV- mijocul sec. XVII*, (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1966), p. 111.

[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 156, 180, 338, 341. All the chroniclers refer only to a lot of slaves and rich booty. The exact date of this first passage of the Danube by the Turks was established by Christian F. Seybold, " Nešri's Notiz über die Eroberung von Vodena-Edess und Čitroz-Kitros-Pydna durch Bajezid I. Jildirim 1389", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 74 (1920), pp. 289–292.

[53] In *Cronici turceşti*, p. 113, Neşri writes that Mircea "was already a *haradjgüzar*" at that time, which means before 1391. See Aurel Decei, "Expediţia lui Mircea cel Bătrîn împotriva acîngiilor de la Karinovasi (1393)", in his collection of studies *Relaţii româno-orientale*, (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1978), pp. 140–155. We are confronted with two problems: localization and date. Emil Turdeanu, in *Roumanian Studies*, V, 1986, 1–40, placed this raid in Krajna. However, if the *kharadj* was already required for the possession of land in Dobrogea, Mircea needed to impose his authority in this new dominion on the

- 1392: the Turks took Silistra, which had been owned by Mircea since 1389.[54]
- 1393: when the Turks seized Turnu, Dan II removed Mircea from the throne, supported by pro-Ottoman boyars, but he died in Bulgaria, probably fighting against Šišman.[55]
- 1394: the pro-Ottoman faction who had elected another prince, Vlad, held power, although Mircea defeated Bayezid in the battle of Rovine.[56]

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local banditry and Kavarna must have been a nest of pirates on land as well as on sea. The date 1391 was found by Nagy Pienaru, "Relaţiile lui Mircea cel Bătrîn cu emiratul pontic Candar-Ogullari", *Revista istorică*, 7:7–8 (1996): pp. 483–510, pp. 501–510. A latter-day chronicler, Müneggimbaşi, would also allege that Mircea paid a tribute before 1391 (*Cronici Turceşti privind Ţările Române. Vol II: Sec. XVII – începutul sec. XVIII.*, edited by M. Guboglu, (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1974), pp. 240–241).

[54] On the history of Silistra during the last years of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth, see Daniel Barbu, "Faits historiques et fictions historiographiques: la δεσποτεία de Mircea le Grand et le ,,despotat" de Silistra," *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 24:4 (1986): pp. 313–322; Andrei Pippidi, "Sur une inscription grecque de Silistra," *ibid.*: 323–332. The Turks took Silistra in 1388, Mircea deprived them of this strategic position on the Danube in 1389, but lost it in 1392. The Turks returned and kept the walled city until 1403, when Mircea releaved it and ruled there until his death.

[55] On Šišman's last defence, see K. Ivanova, "Un renseignement nouveau dans un manuscrit bulgare du XIVe siècle au sujet de la résistance du tsar Ivan Šišman contre les Ottomans près de Nikopol", *Etudes balkaniques* 24:1 (1988): pp. 88–93. On the Turkish actions on the Danube, see also Haralambie Chircă, Constantin Bălan, "O inscripţie din 1397–1398 privitoare la stăpînirea turcească de la Turnu," *Studii şi materiale de istorie medie* 3 (1959): pp. 359–364, although the real date is 1392–1393 (rectified in Andrei Pippidi, "Despre ‚Dan voievod'. Rectificări cronologice şi genealogice," *ibid.* 31 (2013): pp. 47–96, p. 70, fn. 87.

[56] Ibid., pp. 55–57, 68–70. Franz Babinger, „Beginn der Türkensteuer in den Donaufürstentümern", *Südost-Forschungen* 8 (1943): pp. 1–35, believed that Bayezid led only one campaign in Wallachia in 1394 (in the summer or autumn). A first Turkish expedition met resistance on the bank of a river, probably the Argeş (the same stratagem used by the Turks on that occasion is described by Enveri and Orudj, cf. *Cronici turceşti, Vol. I*, pp. 39, 49). See also Aurel Decei, "Două documente turceşti privitoare la expediţiile sultanilor Baiazid I şi Murad al II-lea în ţările române", in id., *Relaţii*, pp. 209–214. The Battle of Rovine is placed in Central Wallachia by Gheorghe T. Ionescu, "Unde sunt Rovinele bătăliei din 1394?," in id., *Contribuţii la istoria românilor (studii şi materiale), Vol. I*, (Brăila: Istros, 2004), pp. 197–228. Regarding its date, George Sp. Radojčić, "La chronologie de la bataille de Rovine," *Revue historique du Sud-Est européen* 5 (1928): pp. 136–139, has suggested 17 May 1395. The sources are fraught with controversy, as was seen in 1986–1988 when they aroused a debate animated by the political significance of the commemoration, cf. Alexandru V. Diţă, *17 mai 1395, o dată importantă în istoriauniversală. Victoria românească de la Rovine*, (Bucharest: Editura Roza Vânturilor, 1995). The date of 10 October 1394 seems, however, more credible: cf. Nicolae Constantinescu, "Puncte de vedere asupra datării bătăliei de la Rovine (,,17 V 1395")," *Revista istorică*, 1:7–8 (1990): pp. 783–802. A striking argument can be found in Philippe de Mézières, *Epistre lamentable et consolatoire* (Jean Froissart, *Chroniques*, Vol. XVI., edited by Kervyn de Lettenhove, (Bruxelles: Devaux, 1872), p. 511: "environ trois ans apassés ot une autre bataille contre les Walaquiens en laquelle il fu desconfis à plain et perdi environ XXXm Turs qui furent

- 1395: an alliance is concluded between Mircea and Sigismund of Luxemburg. Mircea's power is consolidated by a new victory, Sigismund takes Turnu from the Turks.[57]
- 1396: Nikopol, the Turks again at Turnu.[58]

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mors en la bataille et grant planté de crestiens aussi furent mors" (written in 1397). On Vlad, see Gheorghe. T. Ionescu, "Contribuţiuni la cronologia domniei lui Mircea cel Bătrîn şi a lui Vlad voievod în Ţara Românească", in id., *Contribuţii.*, pp. 131–158, and Octavian Iliescu, "Vlad Ier, voïvode de Valachie: le règne, le sceau et les monnaies," *Revue roumaine d'histoire* 27:1–2 (1988), pp. 73–105. Substantial contributions to the problems of chronology, adding new materials, have been provided by id., "Siglele de pe monetele Ţării Româneşti", *Cronica numismatică şi arheologică* 16 (1942), pp. 10–16; id., "Emisiuni monetare ale Ţării Româneşti din secolele al XIV-lea şi al XV-lea", *Studii şi cercetări de numismatică* 2 (1958), pp. 303–344; Pavel Chihaia, "Efigii monetare şi portrete votive ale voievozilor Radu I şi Mircea cel Bătrîn", *Glasul Bisericii* 27:5–6 (1968), pp. 721–747; Jean N. Mănescu, "Cu privire la originea stemei Ţării Româneşti," *Cercetări numismatice* 5 (1983), pp. 183–195; and Octavian Iliescu, "La naissance d'une idée politique: Byzance après Byzance," *Revue roumaine d'histoire* 25:1–2 (1986), pp. 35–44.

[57] The covenant between Mircea and Sigismund, in *Documenta Romaniae historica, D, Vol. I*, (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1977), pp. 138–140 (dated 7 March 1395), had been preceded by another confrontation with a Turkish vanguard in the woods of the mountainous region of Prahova, described by Chalkokondylas (Laonic Chalcocondil, *Expuneri istorice,* translated by V. Grecu, (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RPR, 1958), p. 63) and by Ottoman sources (*Cronici turceşti, Vol. I*, pp. 303, 442). The military assistance sent by the king of Hungary failed to drive the Turks out of Wallachia. This defeat probably occurred in August (Victor Motogna, *Politica externă a lui Mircea cel Bătrîn,* (Gherla: Augustin S. Deacu, 1924), pp. 14–15). Meanwhile, King Sigismund's own troops besieged and occupied Turnu (*Documenta Romaniae historica, D, Vol. I*, pp. 155, 159), but during his return he was attacked by a Romanian uprising (perhaps followers of Vlad, but more likely inhabitants of those counties who took advantage of recent upheavals to pillage). Mircea probably participated in the reinforcement of key strongholds on the Danube. A Byzantine chronicler highlighted a victory against Bayezid, whose treasury was lost in the river, cf. Peter Schreiner, *Die Byzantinischen Kleinchroniken, Vol. I*, (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975), pp. 562, 623, and ibid., *Vol. II*, p. 459, the date of Šišman's death is 29 October 1395. We know from the document published by Decei, "Două documente turceşti", p. 214, that this happened after the crossing of the Danube by the sultan, which confirms the date of 10 October for the Battle of Rovine. Alternatively, a Florentine chronicler recorded a great Turkish victory in May 1395 (Şerban Papacostea, "Mircea cel Bătrîn şi Baiazid. O întregire la cunoaşterea confruntărilor lor armate," *Studii şi materiale de istorie medie* 16 (1998): pp. 19–21). Other sources date the end of the Bulgarian ruler to June 3.

[58] *Documenta Romaniae historica, D, Vol. I*, pp. 149, 153–156, 172. See also Motogna, *Politica externă*, pp. 12, 14–15, 37, fn. 20. Stefan Losonczi had been slain on a battlefield in Wallachia in August 1395, having been sent against Vlad, but in March 1396 the king of Hungary tried to negotiate with Vlad. This attempt was unsuccessful however, because Vlad had already sought the protection of the king of Poland, whose hostility to Sigismund had always been known. See Şerban Papacostea, "Mircea la Nicopol. O mărturie ignorată", *Revista de istorie* 39:7 (1986): pp. 696–698. The retreat from Nikopol, after September 28, was disturbed by an attack on the French and Hungarian crusaders on their way to Sibiu (an event which needs detailed discussion elsewhere). See Froissart, *Chroniques*, Vol. XV, pp. 407–411, 486–487.

- 1397–1398: two Hungarian interventions breath new life into the anti-Ottoman operations, Vlad is captured.[59]

After Ankara, Mircea recaptured Silistra and took sides in the conflict among Bayezid's sons, upholding Musa, then Mustafa.[60] It was not until after his death that Michael, his son and successor, would send his own sons as hostages to Adrianople in 1419. He was made to pay a tribute (the first) equivalent to three years' worth of debt, which means that his father had already been charged with that sum since 1417, but had not paid it.[61] At least, this results from the confusing information provided by Ottoman chroniclers in connection with Hungarian documents. King Sigismund came to take Turnu and manifested his will to maintain the Hungarian suzerainty over Wallachia. During the next twenty years, the country was disputed between Sigismund and Murad II, each of them trying to annex and exploit it through the pretenders to the throne who were serving them.[62] Tracing their history was not easy: many scholars made the blunder of considering two homonymous cousins as the same versatile person, when actually they were enemies.[63] Another prince, Alexandru Aldea, who prided himself on being the vassal of King Sigismund, sought help from Transylvania in 1432, as he was threatened by a Turkish army. Nevertheless, he preferred to negotiate, kept the peace by bargaining at Adrianople and even redeemed 3,000 slaves. The sultan had required hostages (or was it the *devširme* ?) in exchange and Aldea complied. There is not a word about a treaty[64]. As in 1419, a summons was enough. In 1451, in one of the Turco-Hungarian peace agreements, Mehmed II said about Vladislav II, prince of Wallachia: "tenetur dominacioni

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[59] *Documenta Romaniae historica*, D, Vol. I, pp. 162–164, 172. See also N. Iorga, "Comunicări mărunte", *Convorbiri literare*, 35 (1901), p. 1055. During this time, Mircea's authority was still present as far as Caliacra (Sima Ljubić, *Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum Meridionalium, Vol. IV*, (Zagreb: Academia Scientiarum et Artium Slavorum Meridionalium, 1874), pp. 398–399; see also Georgi Djingov, Ana Balkanska, Mariya Yosifova, *Kaliakra, Vol. I. Krepostno stroitelstvo*, (Sofia: Akademično izdatelstvo "Prof. Marin Drinov", 1990).

[60] Pippidi, "Sur une inscription." See Panaitescu, *Mircea*, pp. 308–319, 331–335, and Nagy Pienaru, "Relaţiile lui Mircea cel Mare (1386–1418) cu Mehmed I Celebi," *Revista de istorie* 39 :8 (1986): pp. 774–794. Also see above, fn 6.

[61] *Cronici turceşti, Vol. I*, pp. 32, 51, 85, 116, 161, 181, 291, 308, 403.

[62] Elisabeth A. Zachariadou, "Ottoman Diplomacy and the Danube Frontier (1420–1424)", *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983): 680–690. See also Vasilescu, *Urmaşii lui Mircea.*

[63] Stoica Nicolaescu, *Domnia lui Alexandru Vodă Aldea, fiul lui Mircea-Vodă cel Bătrîn, 1431–1435*, (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1922). See inevitably Pippidi, "Despre 'Dan voievod'".

[64] Nicolaescu, *Domnia lui Alexandru Vodă*. "Environ XX gentilzhommes de Walaquie, lesquelz estoient ostages pour ledit pays de Walaquie" were seen in 1432 at the sultan's court by a Western traveller, cf. *Le Voyage d'Oultremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière,edited* by Charles Schefer, (Paris: Leroux, 1892), p. 190.

mee, sive cum tributo, sive cum alio servicio."[65] The *haraç* was not always indispensable; other services could replace it: supplying victuals or other resources, bringing military assistance and so on. This was the period when a condominium was established for Wallachia, under the joint suzerainty of Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. During the same years, the coins issued in Wallachia were aligned to the financial system of the *akçe*, a rallying to the Ottoman economy which had a clear political signification[66]. The recent discovery of a large treasure at Budeşti is exceptionally revealing: 47,000 *akçe* (55 kgs of silver)[67].

How can we deduce when Wallachia became subordinated to the Porte? Apart from the payment of a tribute, there was participation in Ottoman campaigns. In 1473, Radu the Handsome allegedly sent 12,000 soldiers as far as Persia, for taking part part at the war against Uzun Hassan. This proves that Wallachia was already considered as having been conquered by Mehmed II. It is true, however, that the Wallachian troops encamped separately from the Ottoman forces, which suggests that their country was not integrated into the Ottoman Empire.[68] Although we have no actual record, it is probable that as early as 1462 the legal status of Wallachia had been regulated. When Moldavia was attacked by the Turks in 1473 and 1475, Radu brought his 17,000 soldiers into the Ottoman camp.[69] Besides military service, the new relationship supposed protection from the Porte against the enemies of the tributary principality. This can be seen in 1497: when Moldavia was invaded by a great Polish army under the pretext of an anti-Ottoman expedition, its defence was strengthened by Ottoman troops that also included the Wallachians.[70] The same type of relations is

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[65] Nicolae Iorga, *Acte şi fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor, Vol. III*, (Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1897), pp. 23–27. The settlement was intended for three years, on the eve of the fall of Constantinople! The sultan's title was "imperator Turcorum et Balachorum", but "Latislaus Wayda Balachorum" was personally involved, "sive cum tributo, sive cum alio servicio".

[66] Matei Cazacu, "L'impact ottoman sur les pays roumains et ses incidences monétaires (1452–1454)," *Revue roumaine d'histoire* 12:1 (1973), pp. 159–193; Mihai Maxim, *Romano-Ottomanica. Essays and Documents from the Turkish Archives*, (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2001), pp. 47–65; id., *O istorie a relaţiilor*, pp. 63–102. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the sum of the tribute due from Wallachia was of 17,000 ducats and for Moldavia only 6,000 (Iorga, *Acte şi fragmente*, p.72).

[67] I am grateful to Miss Cristina Tătaru (National History Museum, Bucharest) for the information: 47,257 coins under Murad II, only 39 from Bayezid I and his sons.

[68] Donado da Lezze, *Historia Turchesca (1300–1514)*,edited by I. Ursu, (Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1910), p. 46.

[69] *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt 1504–2004. Portret în cronică*, (Putna: Muşatinii, 2004), pp. 16, 25, 31, 35, 43, 163.

[70] Ibid., p. 37. Kodja Hussein placed particular importance on the fact that Stephen the Great, having asked the Turks to assist him in his resistance to the Poles, received a brocaded cap from the sultan as a token of esteem (*Cronici turceşti, Vol. I*, 465–466).

evident in 1506, when Moldavia was again at war with the king of Poland, who prompted Wallachia to attack the principality. This intervention was prevented only by an order of the sultan, which proves Wallachia's commitment to the Ottoman strategy.

The situation was difficult to understand even for the contemporaries. For instance, in 1595, when Michael the Brave was the champion of independence, the papal Nuncio in Poland tried to foresee what would happen: "la Valacchia sarà ridotta dal Turco in forma di provintia turchesca, o sarà *conservata nel governo che era prima che il Transilvano se ne impadronisse* [an allusion to Michael's relations with Sigismund Báthory] o restarà il suo dominio a questo regno [Poland] o vero al Transilvano".[71] It clearly marks Wallachia's special position, which was unlike that of any other Ottoman province. In their rush to win the support of the Romanians for their cause, the Greek revolutionaries were rejected by the boyars of Wallachia. In a sense, the answer given in 1821 resumed a political system which had survived for centuries:
"Let the Greeks and the Bulgarians do what they wish in their own land to deliver themselves from the Turkish bondage, but we, Romanians, we shall try to manage with the evils we suffer [...] Let us balance with the Turks, because we are not in pain like you."[72]

In practice, if not in theory, there is a difference between the two Romanian principalities. Ion Neculce, the Moldavian chronicler of the early eighteenth century, was persuaded that his country had been privileged since it willingly agreed to subordination, and his friend, Prince Dimitrie Cantemir, in 1711, justified his alliance with the Russian tsar by the Ottoman encroachment on the old pledges.[73] A similar pretence would be difficult to find in Wallachia before the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when not only the political interests of the Wallachian boyars, but also the general opinion insisted that both countries enjoyed the same conditions. If a conquest ever existed, it obviously happened in Wallachia in 1462, but the Ottoman overlordship was limited in practice, not on a legal basis. The arguments of Turcologists against the use of the expression ",autonomy" seems convincing. Not only because Islamic law ignored this notion, but also for another reason: autonomy is conceivable only for a region which is placed within the state to whom it belongs. Moldavia and

[71] *Documente privitóre la istoria Românilor. Vol. XII: 1594–1602 Acte relative la războaiele şi cuceririle lui Mihai-Vodă Viteazul*, (Bucharest: I. V. Socecu), p. 145.

[72] Virgil P.Andronescu, *Contribuţiuni istorice*, (Constanţa, 1901), pp. 18–19 .

[73] The problem is discussed in Maria Magdalena Székely, Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Autour des relations moldo-ottomanes," *Medieval and Early Modern Studies for Central and Eastern Europe* 5 (2013), pp. 149–191.

Wallachia remained outside the borders of the Ottoman Empire (even when the territories of Kamenec and Hotin, although further north than Moldavia, were annexed). The validity of the conventions between Wallachia and the Ottoman Empire was understood in the short-term by the Turks, while the other side believed they could permanently rely on those privileges.

The conclusion is that, despite sometimes inconclusive evidence, the basic contract between rulers and vassals was continuously shaped by the varying circumstances of coexistence of the two partners. Regardless if registered in diplomatic documents or not, the contract was unstable and fluid, so different actors played it differently, according to the political or economic situation.[74]

[74] A general analysis of such situations was provided by Nicolas Pantazopoulos, *Mythical and Pragmatical Elements in the Concept of Islamic Privileges to the Christians,* (Athens: Association Internationale des Études du Sud-Est Européen, 1970).

Old Questions, Old Clichés. New Approaches, New Results?[1] The Case of Moldavia[2]

Ştefan S. Gorovei
Maria Magdalena Székely

For the history of the Romanian people, relations with the Ottoman Empire represent one of its basic chapters, if we only consider the very long period of time of its development (over four centuries) and the fact that they constituted the very frame in which this history had to develop. Nevertheless, Romanian historiography is yet to provide any large detailed reconstruction of the relationship with the Ottoman Empire, or of a fairly complete publication of the sources. It is a frustrating reality that makes the origin of some interpretation often improbable, if not incoherent, both of the sources and of the facts. This is the situation with which we have often been confronted throughout our

[1] A first form of this report was published under the title "Autour des relations moldo-ottomanes," *Medieval and Early Modern Studies for Central and Eastern Europe* 5 (2013): pp. 149–191. Later, certain aspects were detailed and deepened in the reports: "Moldova şi Sublima Poartă. Opinii, clişee, controverse" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the "N. Iorga" Institute of History, Bucharest, 5 December 2013) and "Moldova şi primul ei haraci. Izvoare şi opinii" (paper presented at the "N. Iorga" Institute of History, The "Central Europe, Romanian Principalities and the Black Sea" Programme, Bucharest, 20 February 2014). Some of the new conclusions were incorporated in the present text.
Some hold that the Danubian Principalities were Balkan states too. On this issue and, more generally, on defining the Balkans as a geopolitical space, see Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, vol. 1, *Eighteen and Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), *passim*; Maria Todorova, "The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention," *Slavic Review* 2 (1994): pp. 453–482; Tom Gallagher, "To Be Or Not To Be Balkan: Romania's Quest for Self-Definition," *Daedalus* 3 (1997): pp. 63–83; Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Balkans: From Constantinople to Communism* (New York – Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002), *passim*; Ebru Boyar, *Ottomans, Turks and the Balkans. Empire Lost, Relations Altered* (London – New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), pp. 29–41; Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, updated edition (Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 21–61.

[2] It goes without saying that in the present study the name of *Moldavia* does not refer to the geopolitical realities of today.

research, and which we had to face when drafting the monograph dedicated to Stephen the Great, only the prince of Moldavia (1457–1504)[3] being a point of reference, albeit perhaps the most important, in the evolution of his country's relationship with the Ottoman Empire.

Moreover, there is the inherent difficulty generated by the internationalization of the Ottoman studies which currently render the compilation of a comprehensive bibliography somewhat difficult. The linguistic barrier is an additional factor.

On the other hand, the development of historical thought during the last few decades has brought about many re-evaluations, the formulation of some notions important for investigating these realities, and certainly new approaches. Yet, sometimes the approaches from conceptual and theoretical horizons increasingly higher and more refined become removed from the very facts they refer to, creating a new "reality". Hence the more we progress in the realm of ideas and concepts, the more precise must be the reference to the sources. As the general understanding is changed, the understanding and interpretation of the sources must become more nuanced.

From all these perspectives, the initiative of the Conference seems extremely welcome and helpful for the progress of certain studies that cannot be thought within a small spatial and temporal framework. Yet, it is necessary and maybe useful that the observations collected from such elements be communicated and examined together with other, similar ones. These *membra disjecta* will always help to create a picture that is clearer, more coherent and, perhaps, closer to the cognoscible truth.

This is why it strikes us as a vain undertaking o discuss things only in a purely theoretical manner, to build models necessary for comparisons, to advance or support a hypothesis, to oppose or reject another one. It is only the return to the sources that can ensure the solidity and efficiency of conclusions. In order to deal with the issue that brought us together here, *the Ottoman conquest*, and to find an answer to the question *of whether the Turks conquered Moldavia* – and, moreover, if they did, *how*, and if not, *why* ? –, we made a file as complete as possible. It includes many pieces, chosen from among the most important, interesting and eloquent. All the same, no matter how generous the time allotted to each report may be, it would never be sufficient to present them; in the interest of concision the paper must necessarily be selective. Even so, it seems important to us to mention from the very beginning that research on Moldavia's relations with the Ottoman Empire must begin with an attempt

[3] Ştefan S. Gorovei, Maria Magdalena Székely, *Princeps omni laude maior. O istorie a lui Ştefan cel Mare* (The Holy Monastery of Putna: Muşatinii, 2005).

to find answers to a three-fold question: *by whom, when and how* were the relations established that inaugurated a four-hundred-year *protectorate*?[4]

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A Moldavian chronicler from the seventeenth century, Miron Costin (1633–1691), said that all things are better understood if their presentation begins with their beginning.[5] Thus, here are some observations on the beginnings of the steady relationship of Moldavia with the Ottoman Empire (which the old Romanian texts define using the term *închinare*)[6] and on their periodisation.

For a long time – almost two and a half centuries – these relations were thought to have been established after 1504, namely after the death of Stephen the Great, and even urged by him. This opinion stemmed from the belief that it would have been impossible for Stephen the Great, a champion of the anti-Ottoman struggle, to have accepted the submission reflected in the payment of the *haraç*. It was a true "confrontation of opinions" – among the first in the field of Moldavian historiography – evident, in the interpolations in the chronicle of Gregory Ureche († 1647). On the basis of older sources, this chronicler dated the beginning of Moldavia's relations with the Porte from 1455–1457, during the reign of Peter III Aron, the immediate predecessor of Stephen the Great.[7] His later readers, dissatisfied with this explanation, tried to place the event either before, during the reign of Bogdan II (1449–1451), father of Ste-

[4] Historiography has often spoken, in the case of the Romanian Principalities, of *Ottoman suzerainty* (but, as almost all the studies in the field stress, the terms *suzerainty* / *vassalage* point to a relationship of a quite different nature), of *Ottoman domination* and even of *Ottoman possession*. We distance ourselves from these terms, since we do not think that they address the very complex reality which characterised the presence of these principalities in the *Ottoman Commonwealth*, and we prefer the term *protectorate*, used a long time ago by Joseph von Hammer, *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours*, vol. 2 (Paris: Béthune et Plon, 1844), p. 39. More recently it was accepted by certain specialists on Ottoman history, such as Nicolas Vatin, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, ed. Robert Mantran (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1989), p. 112: "le protectorat ottoman sur la Moldavie".

[5] Miron Costin, "De neamul moldovenilor, din ce țară au ieșit strămoșii lor," in idem, *Opere*, ed. P. P. Panaitescu (Bucharest: Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, 1958), p. 244.

[6] From Latin *inclinare* (Greek *proskynesis*), it signifies in the present case *submission*. On this term, its content and meanings, see: Viorel Panaite, *Război, pace și comerț în Islam. Țările Române și dreptul otoman al popoarelor*, second edition, reviewed and completed (Iași: Polirom, 2013), pp. 277–297.

[7] Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*, ed. P. P. Panaitescu, second edition, reviewed (Bucharest: Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, 1958), p. 90 ("Acestu Pătru vodă au izvodit întâi și au început a da dajdea turcilor").

phen the Great,[8] or later, during the reign of his son, Bogdan III (1504–1517), John Tăutu, the great chancellor of Moldavia, serving as the principal hero.[9] This constant attempt to relate the establishment of the first relations with the Porte to a prince named *Bogdan* was connected to the fact that in the Ottoman diplomatic language, the Moldavians were called *bogdans*, Moldavia was called *Bogdan*(*ia*), while the Moldavian princes were mentioned only as *Bogdan-bey*, omitting their proper names.[10] Taken up by all the Moldavian chroniclers, this version entered the public consciousness. We even find it in a note from the end of the eighteenth century, in a document referring to an impoverished descendent of the great chancellor Tăutu: "Es ist dargethan worden, dass diese Familie von dem Gross-Kanzler Toutul, der das Land mit anderen vier grossen Bojarn den Türken unterworfen hat, herstammet".[11]

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[8] Ureche, *Letopiseţul*, p. 89 ("Scrie la un létopiseţu vechiu sârbăscu, de Azarie călugărul izvodit, precum în zilile acestui Bogdan vodă s-au început a da dajde turcilor şi pentru acéia ne-au numit bogdani până astăzi. Acestŭ Bogdan vodă ieste tată lui Ştefan vodă cel Bun").

[9] Ureche, *Letopiseţul*, p. 135 ("Bogdan vodă, daca stătu la domnie, gândi să-ş întărească lucrurile întăi cu vecinii şi să-ş arate nume bun. Pe învăţătura tătâne-său, a lui Ştefan vodă, trimis-au la împărăţiia turcilor pre Tăutul logofătul cel mare, cu slujitori, pedestrime, dărăbani, de au dus birul, zéce povoară de bani, şi s-au închinatu cu toată ţara la sultan Suleimanu, împăratul turcescu. [*Annotation:* Poate să o fie închinat la sultan Baiazit, că el au fost împărat atunci.] Iară împărăţia, de bucurie mare, cu dragoste i-au priimit şi au dăruit toţi banii Tăutului logofătului celui mare şi i-au adus în ţară şi au ziditu pre acei bani o sfântă biséricâ în satu în Bălineşti, ce ieste la ţinutul Sucévii şi trăieşte până astăzi"). This fragment does not belong to the chronicler Gregory Ureche or to Simeon Dascălul, the successor who gave the first reviewed form to the chronicle. It is not present in the oldest manuscript of the chronicle already reviewed (dated ca 1660–1670), which is held at the Romanian Literature Museum of Iaşi (p. 76 recto): Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Moldova în 'Casa Păcii'. Pe marginea izvoarelor privind primul secol de relaţii moldo-otomane," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie şi Arheologie 'A. D. Xenopol'* 17 (1980): p. 651, note 183. This manuscript, although extremely important and interesting, has never been edited: see Gh. Cardaş, "Odiseea celui mai vechi manuscris inedit al cronicii lui Grigore Ureche," *Mitropolia Olteniei* 5–8 (1970): pp. 566–586 (on the fragment mentioned: pp. 569–570).

[10] Miron Costin, "Cronica ţărilor Moldovei şi Munteniei [Cronica polonă]," in idem, *Opere*, p. 207; Dimitrie Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei* [Demetrii Cantemirii Moldaviae Principis *Descriptio antiqui et hodierni status Moldaviae*], translation according to the Latin original by Gh. Guţu, introduction by Maria Holban, historical comment by N. Stoicescu, cartographic study by Vintilă Mihăilescu, index by Ioana Constantinescu, with a note on the edition by D. M. Pippidi (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1973), p. 52. The scientific explanation came later: "the Turks used to define the countries by the name of their founder"; "we must admit that the name *Boğdan*, *Karaboğdan*, given the good Turkish habit mentioned, derives from Bogdan the Founder" – cf. Aurel Decei, *Relaţii româno-orientale. Culegere de studii* (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1978), p. 124, note 1.

[11] N. Iorga, *Studii şi documente cu privire la istoria românilor*, vol. 5 (Bucharest: Editura Ministerului de Instrucţie, 1903), p. 427.

The erudite prince Demetrius Cantemir († 1723), author of the first scholarly history of the Ottoman Empire, also thought that Moldavia was submitted by Bogdan III,[12] who he thought to have entrusted this mission to chancellor John Tăutu.[13] Cantemir, otherwise well-versed in the historical sources, placed this episode during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, more precisely after his Hungarian campaign, not at all disturbed by the anachronism: at that time, both the prince of Moldavia and his great chancellor had been dead for a considerable number of years. Cantemir also provides a few details which hardly correspond to the historical reality: John Tăutu is claimed to have arrived at the Turkish camp, to have presented the Sultan with the terms of the submission and brought to Suceava the documents related to submission, confirmed by Süleyman himself. Later, Bogdan III is said to have met the Sultan close to Sofia, to give him 4,000 gold coins, 40 mares and 24 falcons, receiving in turn one *cucca*, a mantle (*toga*), and an imperial stallion. This episode also gives Cantemir the occasion to introduce, besides a series of details on the historical past of Moldavia, on the objects and ceremony of the investment of the Moldavian princes at the Porte, some explanations – unfortunately impossible to verify – for the lack of documents confirming the submission of the country. He explains they were kept in public archives in Moldavia (*in scriniis publicis Moldaviae*) and were burned in Iaşi, during the invasion of the Polish king John Sobieski[14] – a true invasion that occurred in 1691, when the prince of Moldavia was none other than the author's father, Constantine Cantemir. In Demetrius Cantemir's opinion, the most important of the destroyed documents was the one showing that Moldavia was submitted to the Turks on her own terms, not by force, and he claims this was the reason all the churches, Christian rites and old laws remained intact, the only obligation being for the Moldavian prince to send to the Porte 4,000 gold coins, 40 mares and 24 falcons as a gift (*piszkiesz*).[15] The insistence Cantemir shows in several of his writings[16] when mentioning the duty of the Moldavian prince to send a number of horses and falcons to the Sultan is not accidental. Initially, namely at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the

[12] Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei*, pp. 124, 136, 178, 270.

[13] Demetrii Principis Cantemirii *Incrementorum et decrementorum Aulae Othoman[n]icae sive Aliothman[n]icae Historiae a prima gentis origine ad nostra usque tempora deductae Libri tres*, praefatus est Virgil Cândea, critice edidit Dan Sluşanschi (Timişoara: Amarcord, 2001), lib. II, cap. IV, § 17 (p. 115); Annotationes ad […] lib. II, cap. IV, ξ–ν (pp. 388–394).

[14] Cantemir, *Incrementorum*, Annotationes ad […] lib. II, cap. IV, ϰ (p. 390).

[15] Cantemir, *Incrementorum*, Annotationes ad […] lib. II, cap. IV, ϰ (p. 390).

[16] Andrei Pippidi, "Politique et histoire dans la proclamation de Démétrius Cantemir en 1711," in idem, *Hommes et idées du Sud-Est européen à l'aube de l'âge moderne* (Bucharest – Paris: Editura Academiei – Éditions du C.N.R.S., 1980), pp. 209–210.

falcons were a gift,[17] but in the course of time and by abuse, they would become a secondary obligation of Moldavia to the Porte.[18] Yet, at least at the beginning of Moldavian-Ottoman relations, its value must be considered symbolic, since, as already mentioned, "to offer falcons as a gift means to recognize the rank of the Sultan's comrade", namely "the honourable quality of his companion at war and at hunting".[19] We must also take into account the fact that the presenting of gifts was reciprocal, as Demetrius Cantemir asserted. The prince of Moldavia received, in turn, a horse from the Sultan. This mutuality was interpreted as a "symbolic comradeship",[20] given the fact that in the mediaeval mentality, "le don du cheval est un signe de reconnaissance entre le bénéficiaire et le donateur: il manifeste qu'ils appartiennent à la même classe" .[21] In short, the repeated mention of the gift of horses and falcons[22] in Demetrius Cantemir's work was designed to emphasise that special relations existed between the Sultan and the prince of Moldavia from the very outset, as opposed to relations characterised as being between the conqueror and the conquered, namely "horizontal relations", as the historian Andrei Pippidi put it.[23]

As a joinder of historical realities and imaginations, the submission of Moldavia during the reign of Bogdan III is, certainly, the *first cliché* in the field. Explainable and enjoying a very long life, it left a deep mark on Romanian historiographical thought, made possible flagrant anachronisms and even survived the discovery of the genuine sources concerning that historical fact. It is true that the sources appeared relatively late, but they have an important quality: they do not contradict, but complement one another, providing a coherent image. The Polish version of an old Moldavian chronicle, dating from the sixteenth century, was published in 1844, in Warsaw, and then in 1867, in Bucharest,[24] in which the event was situated, just as in the

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[17] Andrei Pippidi, "'Şoimii împărăteşti'. Un aspect al obligaţiilor Ţărilor Române faţă de Poartă," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 14 (1996): p. 16.

[18] Ion Matei, "Quelques problèmes concernant le régime de la domination ottomane dans les Pays Roumains (concernant particulièrement la Valachie)," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 1 (1972): p. 74.

[19] Pippidi, "'Şoimii împărăteşti'," pp. 16, 17.

[20] Pippidi, "'Şoimii împărăteşti'," p. 16.

[21] Reynald Couillet, "Le motif du don du cheval dans le *Lancelot* en prose," in *Le cheval dans le monde médiéval* (Aix-en-Provence: "Sénéfiance", 32, 1992), p. 169.

[22] For the gifts consisting of animals, but related to the Byzantine world, see Nicolas Drocourt, "Les animaux comme cadeaux d'ambassade entre Byzance et ses voisins (VII^{e}–XII^{e} siècle)," in *Byzance et ses périphéries. Hommage à Alain Ducellier*, ed. Bernard Doumerc et Christophe Picard (Toulouse: C.N.R.S. – Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 2004), pp. 67–93.

[23] Pippidi, "'Şoimii împărăteşti'," p. 16.

[24] Cf. *Cronicile slavo-române din sec. XV–XVI publicate de Ion Bogdan*, ed. P. P. Panaitescu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1959), p. 164.

chronicle of Gregory Ureche, in 1454–1457, during the reign of Peter Aron: "Za tego voievodi poczęli Volochovie davacz dan Turkom" (*In the time of this voivode the Moldavians began to pay tribute to the Turks*).[25] The possible common source of these chronicles was discovered by the Slavist Ioan Bogdan at Saint Petersburg and published in 1909.[26] While referring to the same prince Peter Aron it reads: "**И при нем нача сѧ дан тоурскаа**" (*And in his time the Turkish payment began*).[27]

Almost at the same time the diplomatic sources were found, which confirmed the chronicles. These documents, three in the original version, two written in Slavonic and one in Osman-Turkish, had been part of the Polish royal archives (*archivum regni in arce Cracoviensi*), stored in the Russian warehouses of Moscow. Erazm Rykaczewski published the summaries of two of them in Paris, in 1862.[28] A quarter of a century later, V. A. Uljanicki edited all the three of them in Moscow.[29] The document written in Osman-Turkish was not edited in its original version until 1921, by Friedrich Kraelitz.[30] Based on these sources, the way in which Moldavia came to pay tribute to Sultan Mehmed II was reconstructed – not without difficulties and after rather long discussions which lasted for almost half a century – with new answers to the old questions of *who*, *when* and *how*. The "scenario" constructed by the Romanian

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[25] *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 168 and 178.

[26] *Cronicile slavo-române*, p. 53.

[27] *Cronicile slavo-române*, pp. 56 and 61.

[28] Erazm Rykaczewski, *Inventarium omnium et singulorum privilegiorum, litterarum, diplomatarium, scripturarum et monumentorum quaecunque in archivo regni in arce Cracoviensi continentur* [drafted in 1682] (Paris: 1862), p. 139 (summary of the document of the "assembly" of Vaslui, of 1456 <June> 5), p. 143 (summary of the document of Mehmed II for the merchants of Cetatea Albă (Akkerman), of 5 regeb 860 H. = 9 June 1456). The edition of Mustafa A. Mehmed, *Documente turceşti privind istoria României*, vol. 1, 1455–1574 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1976), p. 1, no. 1, affirms that the letter of Mehmed II of <1455>, October 5, would have been published by Rykaczewski, *Inventarium*, p. 146, but there one can find documents from 1532–1536.

[29] В. А. Уляницкий, *Материалы для истории взаимных отношений России, Польши, Молдавии, Валахии и Турции* (Moscow: 1887), pp. 86–88, no. 79 (document of the "assembly" of Vaslui, of 1456), p. 88, no. 80 (document of the Sultan, of 860 H., mentioning the merchants from Cetatea Albă (Akkerman), *in Polish translation*), pp. 88–99, no. 81 (letter of Mehmed II, of <1455> October 5).

[30] Friedrich Kraelitz [von Greifenhorst], *Osmanische Urkunden in türkischer Sprache aus der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts. Ein Beitrag zur osmanischen Diplomatik* (Vienna: Hölder, 1921, Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philosoph.-Hist. Klasse. Sitzungsberichte, 197 Bd., 3. Abh.), pp. 44–46 (and facsimile 1). The photograph after which Kraelitz published the document had been provided by the Romanian Slavist Ioan Bogdan: Kraelitz, *Osmanische Urkunden*, p. 5, note 4 and N. Iorga, "Actul lui Mohammed al II-lea pentru negustorii din Cetatea Albă (1456)," *Revista Istorică* 4–6 (1924): p. 105.

researchers dates the relations with the Porte to 1456, and the preludes to this event from 1453–1456. Soon after the fall of Constantinople, Sultan Mehmed sent an ultimatum to Moldavia ("a vaivoda Moldaviae [...] gravia tributa requirit"[31]). The negations were initiated – by common agreement with the suzerain from Krakow – by prince Alexander II, the Moldavian ruler, and continued during the reign of his successor, Peter III Aron, till the beginning of October 1455. Then, the Moldavian ambassador, chancellor Michael (Mihul) received the document by which Mehmed II announced he would conclude peace with Moldavia in exchange for an annual *haraç* (**харач**) of 2,000 gold ducats. The term for the first payment was three months.[32] In 1456, on 5 January according to certain historians,[33] on 5 June according to others,[34] an assembly of the representatives of the "political class" met in Vaslui and entitled the same chancellor to present the money to the Sultan. On 9 June 1456 (5 regeb 860 H.), the conqueror of Constantinople confirmed the conclusion of the peace and guaranteed the freedom of Moldavian trade in his empire.[35]

This answer to the questions *who*, *when* and *how* turned out to be in full accord not only with the authentic sources (preserved by a coincidence that can be easily explained),[36] but also with the general state of political affairs in Moldavia at the middle of the fifteenth century. It must be emphasised that there is no "treaty" of any kind among the documents known today. The letter addressed by Mehmed II, on 5 October 1455, to the prince of Moldavia is a challenge,[37] an ultimatum, while the one dated 9 June 1456 is a simple notifi-

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[31] Şerban Papacostea, "La Moldavie, état tributaire de l'Empire ottoman au XV^e siècle: le cadre international des rapports établis en 1455–1456," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 3 (1974): p. 446, note 2; Şerban Papacostea, "Moldova, stat tributar al Imperiului Otoman în secolul al XV-lea: cadrul internaţional al raporturilor stabilite în 1455–1456," in idem, *Evul Mediu românesc. Realităţi politice şi curente spirituale* (Bucharest: Corint, 2001), p. 111, note 2.

[32] Mehmed, *Documente turceşti*, p. 1, no. 1.

[33] Gorovei, "Moldova," pp. 631–639.

[34] Leon Şimanschi, "'Închinarea' de la Vaslui (5 <iunie> 1456)," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie şi Arheologie 'A. D. Xenopol'* 18 (1981): pp. 613–637.

[35] Mehmed, *Documente turceşti*, p. 2, no. 2.

[36] These documents remained in the hands of chancellor Michael (Mihul), who took them with him to Poland when he took refuge there in 1457. All his archives (as well as the documents of his estates of Moldavia and the safe conducts sent by Stephen the Great to guarantee his safe return to the country) may have been taken over by the kingdom's archives upon his death. In the eighteenth century, when Poland was divided, the documents of the royal archives were sent to the archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Russia.

[37] In the text edited the name of "John Peter voivode and prince of Morovlahia" is mentioned as addressee, but it was noticed that this name "was written on a scraped place" (Mihai Costăchescu, *Documente moldoveneşti înainte de Ştefan cel Mare*, vol. 2 (Iaşi: Viaţa Românească, 1932), p. 801, note 1; see also Уляницки, *Материалы*, p. 88, note 1: "*Петру* написано по подчищенному". Could it have been the name of voivode Alexander ?!

cation with no addressee mentioned. Indeed, those who summarised it in the seventeenth century registered it as being sent to the king of Poland![38] Consequently, so far one cannot speak of a *conquest* of Moldavia.

In spite of the explicit and clear-cut character of the sources, some other hypotheses were formulated which seemed to contradict the sources themselves. Thus, in 1983, Elizabeth Zachariadou expanded the time when this type of Moldo-Ottoman relations began by three and a half decades.[39] According to her, a "treaty" was concluded in 1420, between Sultan Mehmed I and prince Alexander the Good (1400–1432), who became a "tribute-paying vassal", after an Ottoman invasion in Moldavia. In reality, Ottoman detachments devastated the Southern regions of Moldavia at the time, attacked Akkerman (Moncastro) without success, and *temporarily* occupied Kilia (Lycostomo).[40] The payment of tribute during that year or subsequent years is not mentioned by any historical source.

According to another hypothesis – a more recent one, put forward by Alexandru Simon – a Moldo-Ottoman "treaty" must have existed, concluded as far back as the end of the fourteenth century, namely around 1389–1391, between Sultan Bayezit I (1389–1402) and the prince of Moldavia, Peter I (1375–1391). It is a point of view that seems to be designed to completely change the scenario established through the previous studies and interpretations, expanding the time when the Moldo-Ottoman relations began by almost seven decades. Although mentioned in two studies printed the same year,[41] this hypothesis is

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[38] "Imperator Turcarum regi Poloniae significat se pacem fecisse cum Petru palatino Valachiae et mandasse suis subditis ut non impediant negotiationem mari et terra" (Rykaczewski, *Inventarium*, p. 143, "Anno 1455").

[39] Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, "Ottoman Diplomacy and the Danube Frontier (1420–1424)," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983): pp. 680–690, reprinted in eadem, *Studies in Pre-Ottoman Turkey and the Ottomans* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007). Cf. pp. 685–686: "If one considers the Ottoman methods of conquest of that period, it seems likely that Alexander of Moldavia retained control of his territories (except Kilia) by becoming a tribute-paying vassal of the sultan".

[40] Cf. Viorica Pervain, "Lupta antiotomană a Ţărilor Române în anii 1419–1420," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Cluj-Napoca* 19 (1976): pp. 73–75; Şerban Papacostea, "Kilia et la politique orientale de Sigismond de Luxembourg," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 3 (1976): p. 428, reprinted in idem, *La Mer Noire, carrefour des grandes routes intercontinentales 1204–1453* (Bucharest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2006), p. 246.

[41] Alexandru Simon, "Bisericile Turcului: *Valahii* lui Spandounes și geneza mitropoliilor Ţării Românești și Moldovei," *Studia Universitatis* Babeș Bolyai, *Series Theologiae Orthodoxae* 1 (2010): pp. 91–97 (see pp. 95–96); Alexandru Simon, "Annus mirabilis 1387: King Sigismund, the Ottomans and the Orthodox Christians in the Late 1380s and Early 1390s," in *Emperor Sigismund and the Orthodox World*, ed. Ekaterini Mitsiou, Mihailo Popović, Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, Alexandru Simon (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), pp. 127–152 (see pp. 149–150).

yet to prove persuasive.[42] We limit ourselves, for the time being, to the observation that, on the one hand, no conclusion generally submitted by historians becomes *eo ipso facto* a cliché, and that, on the other hand, a new approach does not always lead to an acceptable new answer.

This is why without denying the possible existence of some Moldo-Ottoman contacts even before the fall of Constantinople,[43] (without supposing the existence of a diplomatic or military commitment, a submission and tribute payment), we think we must stick to the circumstances described and to the year 1456.[44] From this year, 1456, onward the periodisation of the Moldo-Ottoman relations can begin.

From now on, the evolution of these relations can be counted in decades. First of all it is a three decade period, from 1456 to 1486, including 17 years

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[42] The special study dedicated to this issue – Al. Simon and Marius Tărîţă, "The Question of Moldavia's Oldest Treaty with the Ottoman Empire" – was announced as "forthcoming" in *Revista de Istorie a Moldovei*, Kishinev, 2 (2009) or 2 (2010). Despite all the kind help of our colleagues from Kishinev, we failed to identify this study. The hypothesis of the "treaty" of 1389–1391 rather seems the expression of the desire for sensation: neither the general political context nor the historical sources seem to support it. The document that inspired it is, at first sight, the result of an error: a photograph of the challenge of Mehmed II, of 5 October <1455>, overlapped by a Russian summary, in which the name of Mehmed had been replaced with that of Bayezit! It would be tedious and useless to try to find here and now arguments *for* or *against* the existence of this "treaty" of 1389–1391. We shall wait for the author(s) to demonstrate or withdraw the hypothesis.

[43] See, for example, the information that Ovidiu Cristea has recently drawn the attention to, "Prieten prietenului şi duşman duşmanului: colaborări militare moldo-otomane în domnia lui Ştefan cel Mare," in *Putna, ctitorii ei şi lumea lor* (Bucharest: Oscar Print, 2011), pp. 77–78; Ovidiu Cristea, "The Friend of My Friend and the Enemy of My Enemy: Romanian Participation in Ottoman Campaigns," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 257–258. The document mentioning this fact, dated by the editors <1432 May-June>, was published in *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, D. *Relaţii între Ţările Române*, vol. 1 (1222–1456), ed. Ştefan Pascu, Constantin Cihodaru, Konrad G. Gündisch, Damaschin Mioc, Viorica Pervain (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1977), pp. 291–292, no. 192. If the date proposed is correct, then "the prince of Moldavia" (**молъ-довъски господаръ**) the letter mentions can be only Elijah I, during his first reign (January 1432–September 1433). The Turkish request of help (**просили помочъ**), addressed to the Moldavians in view of a war against Hungary must have a different explanation than the supposed Moldo-Ottoman treaty of 1389–1391.
For other instances of Moldo-Ottoman contact before 1453, see Alexandru Simon, "Porturile Moldovei, Ştefan II, Iancu de Hunedoara şi Murad II în documente italiene (1444–1446)," *Analele Ştiinţifice ale Universităţii 'Alexandru Ioan Cuza' din Iaşi*, serie nouă, *Istorie*, 52–53 (2006–2007): pp. 7–25.

[44] The same date is also preferred by the Turkish historians, such as Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (London – New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004), p. 91.

without any special tension, followed by what the Romanian historians called the "thirteen years' war", waged by Stephen the Great from 1473 to 1486.[45] The tribute payment[46] continued, even though the attestations are sporadic. They refer to the years 1465,[47] 1468,[48] as well as, in general, to the period before 1473.[49] The amount[50] initially approved for the annual tribute – 2,000 gold ducats – was increased to 3,000 florins, some time during the first part of Stephen the Great's reign: either in 1457, to mark his acceptance as prince of Moldavia, or in 1465, to recognise his reign over Kilia.[51] As for this event, the diplomatic sources mention for the first time (even indirectly), an *ahd-nâme* (capitulation) that Stephen had received from Mehmed II.

The interruption of the tribute payment in 1473, perhaps in spring, broke the equilibrium that had been maintained between the two parties. The state of peace turned into a state of war. It is rather well known, in great detail, what followed. The years 1473–1486 illustrated the great efforts of Stephen the Great to escape the relations with the Porte. The brilliant victory of Vaslui (10 January 1475), which increased the hope of some European courts, was

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[45] The syntagma belongs to historian Leon Şimanschi; see Leon Şimanschi, Dumitru Agache, "Moldova între anii 1469 şi 1473: program de guvernare şi conjuncturi politice," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie 'A. D. Xenopol'* 35 (1998): p. 18, asterisk, which announced "our next study, 'Războiul moldo-otoman de 13 ani (1473–1486), ' now in manuscript and developed in several parts". Unfortunately, this study was never published.

[46] We draw attention to the fact that in this case too (cf. also *supra*, note 6) it is a matter of terminology. The historical sources use, besides the term *haraç* (**харач**), either the Slavonic word **дан** (or **дан тоурскаа**), namely *what is given* (to the Turks), in Romanian *dare* or *dajdie*, or the Latin word *tributum*. Throughout the centuries, the Moldavian sources use no other term to designate the tribute and the relationship established in 1456. The prince of Moldavia was considered *tributarius*, *czinshafftig*, *kharadjgüzar* of the Sultan. Cf. Ştefan S. Gorovei, "'Darea turcească': o problemă de terminologie" (in manuscript). It should be also mentioned that the Moldavian historical sources do not register any changing in the character of this relationship.

[47] Jan Długosz: after the conquest of Kilia, Stephen appeased the Sultan "*cum tributo et muneribus*" (Joannis Długossii seu Longini Canonici Cracoviensis *Historiae Polonicae*, libri XII…, cura et impensis Alexandri Przezdziecki (Krakow, 1878), p. 409).

[48] Letter of Stephen to the king of Poland, after the battle of Baia (December 1467): "*recipiebamus tributum et solvebamus Thurcis*" (P. P. Panaitescu, "Contribuţii la istoria lui Ştefan cel Mare," *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secţiunii Istorice*, s. III, 15 (1934): p. 4).

[49] Jan Długosz: "*tributum quotannis Turco reddebat*" (Długossii *Historiae Polonicae*, libri XII…, p. 408); Angiolello: "Conte Stefano, il quale gli pagava tributo" (Donado da Lezze, *Historia turchesca (1300–1514)*, ed. I. Ursu (Bucharest: Ediţiunea Academiei Române, 1909), p. 82).

[50] On this aspect of Moldavia's debts to the Porte see: M. Berza, "Haraciul Moldovei şi Ţării Româneşti în sec. XV–XIX," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 2 (1957): pp. 7–47; Tasin Gemil, *Românii şi otomanii în secolele XIV–XVI*, second edition, reviewed (Constanţa: Ovidius University Press, 2008), pp. 313–315.

[51] Gorovei, "Moldova," p. 641.

followed by the Sultan's campaign in the summer of 1476.[52] Although victorious on the battlefield at Valea Albă (26 July 1476), Mehmed could not value this "local, limited victory" in any way.[53] He had to withdraw relatively quickly, without entering any of the fortresses that formed the country's defence system, and was even forced to give up the booty looted by his soldiers. The attempt to replace Stephen with another member of the ruling family, who would have shown more malleability and obedience to the requirements of the Porte, was not successful. The campaign yielded no practical gains. The first attempt to conquer Moldavia failed. The contemporary historical sources are clear-cut in this regard. King Matthias wrote of the "shameful running away" of those defeated through iron, hunger, pestilence and exhaustion,[54] while the old historian of the Byzantine court, Sphrantzes, noticed that the Sultan came back from Moldavia "more defeated than victorious".[55]

Nevertheless, on his way back, Mehmed still harboured hopes of imposing "another voivode in Moldavia" (*imperator alium vaivodam ad Moldaviam eligere vellet*),[56] and the imperial chancellery would release "letters of victory" or "letters of conquest" (*fetih-nâme*),[57] which described the success of the expedition to Moldavia in rich phrases. Such documents, just like the flattering reports of the chronicles, fostered the myth that after the campaign of 1476, Moldavia became a tributary to the Porte. In 1567, Sultan Selim II affirmed that "Moldavia has been a vassal of the Turkish emperor for one hundred years (*ziemia moldawska*

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[52] On the events of 1475–1476 see the more recent studies: Alexandru Simon, "În jurul bătăliei de la Vaslui (1474–1475). Consideraţii asupra relaţiilor dintre regatul Ungariei, Moldova şi Ţara Românească," *Studia Universitatis* Babeş Bolyai, *Historia* 2 (2004): pp. 3–26; Alexandru Simon, "Populaţie şi cruciadă în Moldova: primăvara anului 1475," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie 'A. D. Xenopol'* 47 (2010): pp. 143–148.

[53] Aurel Decei, *Istoria Imperiului Otoman până la 1600* (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1978), p. 123. See also Vatin, *Histoire*, p. 101: "Incapable d'exploiter sa victoire, le sultan fit retraite en ravageant le pays…".

[54] A. Veress, *Acta et epistolae relationum Transylvaniae Hungariaeque cum Moldavia et Valachia*, vol. 1, 1468–1540 (Cluj – Budapest, 1914), pp. 26–27, no. 23.

[55] Georgios Sphrantzes, *Memorii*, ed. Vasile Grecu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1966), p. 145.

[56] Veress, *Acta*, pp. 23–24, no. 20.

[57] Mihail Guboglu, "Izvoare turco-persane privind relaţiile lui Ştefan cel Mare cu Imperiul Otoman," *Revista Arhivelor* 2 (1982): pp. 134–145; the author published the text of a *fetih-nâme* (that seems to have been sent to Uzun Hassan; pp. 139–142) and mentioned the existence of another two (p. 143); Tahsin Gemil, "*Fetih-name* a sultanului Mehmed al II-lea privind campania din 1476 împotriva Moldovei," *Revista Arhivelor* 3 (1982): pp. 252–258. For comment on these sources see: Gorovei, Székely, *Princeps*, pp. 184–185. It may be interesting to note that the first *fetih-nâme* was first published by the Hungarian Orientalist L. Fekete, *Einführung in die persische Paläographie. 101 persische Dokumente* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1977), p. 77, no. 4, as being dated 818 H. (1415–1416), a fact that led to the conclusion that the first Ottoman expedition to *Karabogdan* (Moldavia) could have taken place that year!

ode stha liath yesth holdownym pansthwem czeszarza tureczkiego).[58] One year later, grand vizier Mehmed Sokollu said of Moldavia that "this country has been conquered by us for so many years by sword" (*ziemia tha iest od tak wielie liath mieczem od nas dobita*).[59] It is obvious that these assertions did not refer to the Sultan's previous campaign to Moldavia, which had taken placed only three decades before (Süleyman the Magnificent, 1538). However, we draw attention to the contradiction between the reality of the facts and their reflection in the conception of the Porte and, implicitly, in the documents issued there.

The failure of 1476 could be considered confirmation of the opinion that Mehmed II seemed to have expressed only 14 years before, when he had to leave Wallachia after a similar expedition (campaign against Vlad the Impaler, 1462): "Tant que les Valaques tiendront Kilia et Belgorod et que les Hongrois tiendront Belgrade, nous ne pourrons pas les vaincre".[60] A true political programme was expressed in these words,[61] illustrating lucid strategic thought and a perfect geopolitical understanding. On one hand, they show that the Sultan had intuited the close relationship between the Kingdom of Hungary and the two Romanian Principalities: *together*, they formed a true bulwark against the Ottoman advance into the Central Europe,[62] an idea we also find expressed by King Ladislaus Jagiełło of Hungary, in 1497.[63] On the other hand, they suggest the possibility that, at least for the time being, Mehmed took two variants into

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[58] Ilie Corfus, *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone. Secolul al XVI-lea* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1979), pp. 290–291, no. 149.

[59] Corfus, *Documente*, pp. 307–308, no. 155.

[60] Constantin Mihailović, *Mémoires d'un janissaire. Chronique turque*, traduit du vieux polonais par Charles Zaremba, présenté et annoté par Michel Balivet (Toulouse: Anacharsis, 2012), p. 124. For the Romanian version: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române*, vol. 1, ed. Maria Holban (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1968), p. 128 ("Atâta vreme cât Chilia şi Cetatea Albă le ţin şi le stăpânesc românii [*Volochove*], iar ungurii Belgradul sârbesc, noi nu vom putea avea nici o biruinţă").

[61] These words may not have been said as such by Mehmed, but may have been re-constructed by the author, who wrote his memoirs only towards the end of his life. But they can express a trend of thought.

[62] On the concept of the "gate of Christendom" and the various theories stemming from it, concerning the political role of Hungary, Poland and of the Romanian Principalities, see Alexandru Simon, "The Use of 'Gate of Christendom': Hungary's Mathias Corvinus and Moldavia's Stephen the Great Politics in the Late 1400's," *Quaderni della Casa Romena di Venezia* 3 (2004): pp. 205–224; Liviu Pilat, "Conceptul de 'poartă a Creştinătăţii' în retorica voievozilor Moldovei (1475–1538)," in *Ideologii politice şi reprezentări ale puterii în Europa*, ed. Alexandru-Florin Platon, Bogdan-Petru Maleon, Liviu Pilat (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2009), pp. 139–174.

[63] Şerban Papacostea, "De la Colomeea la Codrul Cosminului (poziţia internaţională a Moldovei la sfârşitul secolului al XV-lea)," *Romanoslavica* 17 (1970): p. 552; reprinted in idem, *Evul Mediu românesc*, p. 260.

consideration, separating the conquest of the cities (minimal plan) from the real occupation of the countries (maximal plan). However, over the next 50 years, his successors proceeded as such.

The state of war was suspended just before the death of Mehmed (3 May 1481). In 885 H. (13 March 1480–1 March 1481), a document attesting this was entrusted to an ambassador of Stephen the Great. It mentioned the conclusion of the peace with the increasing of the *haraç* from 3,000 to 6,000 florins. This document[64] is named *sulh-nâme* in its title and *ahd-nâme* in its ending, namely a letter of peace, a letter of covenant, or capitulation.[65] On 31 October 1481, Bayezit II, successor to Mehmed, reduced the tribute by 1,000 florins, as a gesture designed to win the benevolence of the Moldavian prince.[66] It was too late: war broke out once more in the Romanian territory. Yet, the best form of defence is attack.

Bayezit seems to have followed his father's suggestion in these circumstances. In 1484, he organised a campaign (*ghāzā*)[67] designed to conquer not the entire country, but only the two Pontic cities of Kilia and Akkerman. The strike was limited and precise, and brought the desired results: the strengthening of the Sultan's prestige[68] and the confirmation of his reputation as *gazi*.[69] The min-

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[64] It was discovered and published by the Orientalist scholar Aurel Decei, "Tratatul de pace – *sulhnâme* – încheiat între sultanul Mehmed al II-lea şi Ştefan cel Mare la 1479," *Revista Istorică Română*" 15 (1945): pp. 465–494 (reprinted in idem, *Relaţii româno-orientale*, pp. 118–139). The date the author proposed (1479) was changed as a result of an Ottoman document discovered which mentions the doubling of the tribute (from 3,000 to 6,000 florins) in 885 H.: Mustafa A. Mehmet, "Un document turc concernant le kharatch de la Moldavie et de la Valachie aux XV^{e}–XVI^{e} siècles," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 1–2 (1967): pp. 265–274 (document at pp. 272–274). For a more extensive discussion see Gorovei, Székely, *Princeps*, pp. 191–194.

[65] On this document see the more recent study of Sándor Papp, "Ştefan cel Mare, le roi Mattias et l'Empire ottoman," in *Enjeux politiques, économiques et militaires en Mer Noire (XIV^{e}–XXI^{e} siècles). Études à la mémoire de Mihail Guboglu*, ed. Faruk Bilici, Ionel Cândea, Anca Popescu (Brăila: Istros, 2007), pp. 363–390. The author's remark concerning the difference between this document and the treaty concluded in 1488, between the Sultan and the king of Hungary, is valid, but we must take into account the fact that at the time Moldavia had the status of a *haraç* payer (*kharadjgüzar*) for a quarter of a century. Hence the document presents only "une question concrète, unique": "le rétablissement de la paix" and "la reconnaissance du voïvode […] en tant que vassal turque" (p. 390).

[66] Mehmet, "Un document turc," p. 268.

[67] Sydney Nettleton Fisher, "Civil Strife in the Ottoman Empire," *The Journal of Modern History* 4 (1941): p. 464.

[68] Halil Inalcik, "The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23–24 (1969–1970): p. 246.

[69] John F. Guilmartin Jr., "Ideology and Conflict: The Wars of the Ottoman Empire, 1453–1606," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4 (1988): p. 739.

imal project had been accomplished. The news was spread through *fetih-nâme*[70] too, which certainly announced the conquest of Moldavia ... The Sultan underlined with realism the importance of the cities for the maximal project: Kilia was "chiave et porta ad tutto lo paese de Moldavia et Ongaria et in quel del Danubio" and Akkerman (Moncastro) was "chiave et porta al tutto il paese de Polonia, Russia, Tartaria de tutta al mare maiore".[71]

The conquest of these cities[72] caused anxiety in Europe, as well as a diplomatic scandal, which brought about the imprisonment of the chancellor of the Hungarian kingdom, Archbishop Peter of Kalocsa, charged with neglect because he had not been careful enough to mention Moldavia as a vassal state of Hungary in the treaty King Matthias concluded with Mehmed in 1483. After brief hesitation and a few military confrontations, Stephen the Great reached the final formula. In 1486, he agreed to resume the payment of tribute to the Porte and then the suzerainty of the king of Hungary. This formula was confirmed through the treaties Hungary concluded with the Porte in 1503 and 1519,[73] each time mentioning that the princes of both Romanian Principalities owed to the Porte only *tributum ac munus et seruicia* (*tributum* [...] *et donum et*

[70] Veress, *Acta*, pp. 38–39, no. 35; Andrei Antalffy, "Două documente din Biblioteca Egipteană de la Cairo despre cucerirea Chiliei şi a Cetăţii Albe în 1484," *Revista Istorică* 1–3 (1934): pp. 33–42 (documents, pp. 37–42).

[71] Veress, *Acta*, pp. 38–39, no. 35.

[72] Some of the more recent studies dedicated to this subject: Ovidiu Cristea, "Campania din 1484 în lumina unor noi izvoare veneţiene," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine* (The Holy Monastery of Putna: Muşatinii, 2004), pp. 187–274; Ovidiu Cristea, *Acest domn de la miazănoapte. Ştefan cel Mare în documente inedite veneţiene* (Bucharest: Corint, 2004), pp. 73–118; Alexandru Simon, "Între porturi şi cer. Chilia, Cetatea Albă, Istanbul şi Veneţia în vara anului 1484," *Acta Musei Napocensis* 2 (2002–2003): pp. 229–271; Alexandru Simon, "Chilia şi Cetatea Albă în vara anului 1484. Noi documente din arhivele italiene," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 26 (2008): pp. 177–196; Alexandru Simon, "Between the Italian Crisis and the Transylvanian Borders of the Realm: Bayezid's II Campaign of 1484 and Its Hungarian Aftermath," *Apulum* 1 (2008): pp. 153–182; Alexandru Simon, "The Weak Sultan and the Magnificent Monarchs: Ottoman Actions in the Black Sea Area in 1484," *Il Mar Nero* 7–9 (2007–2009): pp. 217–246; Alexandru Simon, "The Contested Sultan: The Backgrounds of Bayezid II's Moldavian Campaign of 1484," *Eurasian Studies* 7 (2009): pp. 17–50; Alexandru Simon, "Truces and Negotiations between Bayezid II and Matthias Corvinus in the Context of the Hunyadi-Habsburg Conflict (1482–1484)," *Revista Arhivelor*" 2 (2009): pp. 107–114; Nagy Pienaru, "Moldova şi Imperiul Otoman. Solia lui Ştefan cel Mare din 1485," in *Putna, ctitorii ei şi lumea lor*, pp. 85–98; Ştefan Andreescu, "Ştefan vodă la Cetatea Albă," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2012): pp. 37–42; Nagy Pienaru, Ovidiu Cristea, "Campania otomană din 1484. Mărturia lui Ibn Kemal," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2012): pp. 43–58; Şerban Papacostea, "Ştefan cel Mare şi turcii: războiul pierdut (1473–1486). Două documente," *Analele Putnei* 2 (2012): pp. 59–64.

[73] Hurmuzaki-Densuşianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. II, 1 (Bucharest, 1891), p. 20, no. XXIV (20 August 1503, full text) and p. 29, no. XXXI (1519, excerpt).

servitia, respectively): "*et plus ab eis non expetatur*" (1503), "*et ultra nihil ab eis exigatur, neque aliquid innovetur, quod prius non fuit*" (1519). The precise sense of the documents and the essence of the new state of things were mentioned in 1490 by a third, Philippus Buonaccorsi Callimachus: the Moldavians concluded an agreement with the Ottomans "*non ut victi, sed tanquam victores*", "*non armis, sed condicionibus*".[74]

This formula – reached, as already demonstrated, due to the lack of cooperation of the Jagiełło brothers, who were not able to fill the gap that remained after the disintegration of the Golden Horde[75] – remained in force until the kingdom of Saint Stephen fell, on the field of Mohács, in August 1526. We hold that *this* tragic event marked the true turning point in the evolution of the relationship between Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire. The collapse of the equilibrium established in 1486 and which had lasted 40 years, brought about a re-estimation of the positions. This event happened to almost coincide with the death of the prince of Moldavia, Stephen IV the Younger, in January 1527: then begins the reign of Peter IV, also called Rareş (1527–1538, 1541–1546). The serious new state of things may be seen in the fact that the great chancellor of Moldavia, sent to Istanbul, certainly to secure the investiture, remained there for seven months,[76] a quite unusual scenario. The price of the relief must have been a new increasing of the tribute.

The Ottoman sources and later some historical reconstructions too placed an encounter between Peter Rareş and Süleyman the Magnificent in the latter's camp at Buda. The date of the encounter was 10 September 1529, and its purpose – the submission of the country with an annual tribute of 4,000 gold coins, 40 horses and 24 falcons. The conclusion – "from that date forward the principality of Moldavia accepted the Ottoman suzerainty"[77] – has become

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[74] Philippi Callimachi *Ad Innocentium VIII de bello Turcis inferendo oratio*, ed. Irmina Lichońska, Tadeusz Kowalewski (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1964), p. 50. This text – an exceptional source for the history of Stephen the Great's Moldavia – was first mentioned by P. P. Panaitescu, "Ştefan cel Mare în lumina cronicarilor contemporani din ţările vecine," *Studii şi Cercetări Ştiinţifice*, *Istorie* 2 (1960): p. 209, and was later valued by Şerban Papacostea, in two studies: "Politica externă a Moldovei în vremea lui Ştefan cel Mare: puncte de reper," *Revista de Istorie* 1 (1975): p. 16 and "Tratatele Ţării Româneşti şi Moldovei cu Imperiul Otoman în secolele XIV–XVI: ficţiune politică şi realitate istorică," in *Stat. Societate. Naţiune. Interpretări istorice*, ed. Nicolae Edroiu, Aurel Răduţiu, Pompiliu Teodor (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1982), pp. 97–98 (reprinted in idem, *Evul Mediu românesc*, pp. 98–99).

[75] Subhi Labib, "The Era of Suleyman the Magnificent: Crisis of Orientation," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4 (1979): p. 441.

[76] *Egregius Theodorus, supremus logofetus* [...]*, rediit a summo Imperatore Turcarum, qui septem fere mensibus inibi agebatur*: Veress, *Acta*, p. 150, no. 113 (19 November 1527).

[77] Tahsin Gemil, "În faţa impactului otoman," in *Petru Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1978), p. 145.

a cliché, echoed even in European historiography. But the documents show something quite different. On 10 September 1529, Peter Rareş was in Moldavia, in the city of Hârlău (*Civitas Bahlovia*), where he was dictating a letter to the inhabitants of Bistritz, in Transylvania.[78] As for the *real* figures, for tribute and gifts, they were, at this time, much greater (10,000 ducats, 500 horses and 300 falcons). Certainly, we are faced with an anachronism.

In the three quarters of a century after accepting the Ottoman "protectorate" with annual tribute payment in order to redeem the peace and autonomy of the country, no important event can be identified in Moldo-Ottoman relations that was able to bring about an essential change of the status of Moldavia for the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, in May 1531, Süleyman the Magnificent wrote to King Sigismund of Poland to vehemently protest about the acceptance of the Moldavian ambassadors: the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia *servi, subditi et tributarii mei sunt, eorumque provinciae computantur inter alia dominia nostra et in numero provinciarum Bosnae et Samandriae habentur, nec dissimiles sunt provinciis meis propriis; sicut et subditi eorum sunt ad similitudinem subditorum meorum*.[79] In 1523, the same sultan informed the prince of Moldavia, Stephen the Younger, of the conquest of the island of Rhodes (December 1522), "as a friend of his" (*tamquam amico suo*).[80] In 1531, Stephen's successor was no longer "amicus suus", but "servus, subditus et tributarius". Or, during the respective period of time no Moldo-Ottoman military confrontation took place to justify such a change of attitude; only the changing of the ratio of forces after Mohács could justify Süleyman's words. Many years ago these words

[78] Veress, *Acta*, pp. 197–198, no. 157.

[79] Hurmuzaki-Iorga, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. XI (Bucharest, 1900), p. 21, no. XXV. The same letter dated only with the Ottoman month and the Hegira year is in Hurmuzaki-Bogdan too: *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, supl. II, 1 (Bucharest, 1893), pp. 24–27, no. IX (see p. 26: "sont mes esclaves et tributaires et leurs possessions, incorporées dans nos autres États au même titre que la Bosnie et la Sémendrie, constituent ma propriété"). Also mentioned by Viorel Panaite: "The Legal and Political Status of Wallachia and Moldavia in Relation to the Ottoman Porte," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, pp. 21–22.

[80] Quotation from a report dated 22 March 1523, sent to Archduke Ferdinand of Austria from Pardubice: "Retulerunt etiam oratores Ungari *tyrannum Turcorum scripsisse Moldavo tamquam amico suo…*": *Politikatörténeti források Bátori István első helytartóságához (1522–1523)* [*Politisch-geschichtliche Quellen zur Geschichte der ersten Statthalterschaft von István Bátori (1522–1523)*], ed. C. Tóth Norbert (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 2010), p. 204, no. 181. The term "amicus" perhaps invites special discussion. It is reminiscent of the term employed by Philippus Buonaccorsi Callimachus (*Ad Innocentium VIII,* p. 50), who states that the Sultan had to name Stephen the Great "ally and friend" (*coactus* […] *Stephanum ipsorum principem* […] *socium atque amicum appellare*). Is this an echo of the well-known expression "friend of my friend and enemy of my enemy"?

were considered to have expressed "a simple claim, with no cover".[81] While referring to them, two specialists of the Ottoman world also noted: " L'assimilation des deux pays roumains aux *sanğak* de Bosna et de Semendire était sans doute abusive; elle ne correspondait aucunement à la réalité politique et relevait plutôt de la rhétorique ottomane". Moreover, the Sultan's words "contenaient [...] une revendication et une double menace".[82] Thus, it is "bel et bien d'une conception politique, de l'interprétation que Süleymān donnait (comme certains de ses prédécesseurs d'ailleurs) au *dār al-'ahd*".[83]

We do not doubt the validity of these explanations. But they refer to the "meridian" of Istanbul. Seen from Suceava, things were different and so were the perceptions and interpretations. After the dramatic events of 1538–1541, the prince of Moldavia would affirm (1542) that the Sultan "infringed his fidelity" (*violatam eius erga se fidem*), by "not taking into account the treaty and agreements his predecessors concluded with the Moldavians, not even his oath" (*non habita faederis et pactorum que maiores sui cum Valachis inierant, non habita etiam iuris iurandi sui racione*).[84] All this seems to have infringed the condition formulated in 1519: *neque aliquid innovetur, quod prius non fuit*.

It is obvious that the positions were irreconcilable. It is also obvious that the balance of power was not in favour of Moldavia. Peter Rareş would characterise it through the parable of the cohabitation of the wolf with the sheep. According to our knowledge of this prince, we can say that his general politics was not characterised by the greatest prudence or wisdom. He could not find in Vienna the *Christian suzerain with which to replace the one lost in 1526*. His attempt to find in the other king of Hungary, Zápolya, an ally under the same patronage of the Great Turk, also failed. Thus began the Sultan's campaign of 1538, officially included in the category of the "holy wars" (*Gazây-i Kara Boğdan* – the holy war for Moldavia).[85]

This point in the history of the Romanians' relations with the Porte could be dedicated a debate like that which has brought us together these days in Vienna. The contrary opinions may be rooted in the different approaches to the matter. If they refer exclusively (or especially) to the sources of the Ottomans

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[81] Gorovei, "Moldova," p. 658.

[82] Mihnea Berindei, Gilles Veinstein, *L'Empire Ottoman et les Pays Roumains 1544–1545. Étude et documents* (Paris – Cambridge: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1987), p. 54.

[83] Berindei, Veinstein, *L'Empire Ottoman*, p. 55.

[84] Document found at *Biblioteka Narodowa* of Warsaw, published by Constantin Rezachevici, "Petru Rareş şi lumea creştină în anii 1541–1542, după noi izvoare polone. Solia hatmanului Petru Vartic din 1542," 2, *Revista Istorică* (serie nouă) 7–8 (1990): pp. 702–703.

[85] Tahsin Gemil, "Agresiunea otomano-tătaro-poloneză şi căderea lui Petru Rareş," in *Petru Rareş*, p. 154; Panaite, *Legal and Political Status*, p. 11.

and focus on their juridical regulations, the Turcologists answered, answer and maybe will always answer positively: *yes, it was a conquest*. The Romanian Turcologist Mihail Guboglu did just that half a century ago: "un problème majeur se pose à l'historiographie roumaine, celui de savoir si la Moldavie fut en réalité ou non conquise à la suite de l'expédition turque de 1538, entreprise pour renverser Pierre Rareș de son trône. Bien que se soit là une question soulevée déjà par les historiens roumains, néanmoins elle n'a pas été résolue du fait que ces derniers ont négligé les sources turques et aussi parce qu'on ne l'a pas posée sur un fondement juridique".[86] In the years that followed, a large number of studies – also based on the documents found in the archives of the former Ottoman Empire – have posed a serious challenge to the picture Guboglu painted.[87] Many Romanian historians, and Turks too,[88] have approached the event of 1538 and its immediate consequences in a more relaxed manner. In the opinion of one of the authors of the present paper, formulated in 1980, the year 1538 could not be ascribed the significance of some basic changes in the status of Moldavia, *from the point of view of the Moldavian realities*:[89] "A more nuanced interpretation should replace the clear-cut formulations and chronologic rigorous delimitations. *Could the year 1538 be considered a turning point or does it represent, just like the other years (1473, 1486, 1504), the inauguration of a new stage in the Moldo-Ottoman relations, with the increase of the charges, especially of the economical ones*?".[90] A succinct analysis of the structural elements of the Moldo-Ottoman relations concluded that the innovations were so min-

[86] M. Guboglu, "L'inscription turque de Bender relative à l'expédition de Soliman le Magnifique en Moldavie (1538/945)," *Studia et Acta Orientalia* 1 (1957): p. 186 (Romanian version: "Inscripția sultanului Suleiman Magnificul în urma expediției în Moldova (1538/945)," *Studii. Revistă de Istorie* 2–3 (1956): p. 122). His "étude consacrée à la campagne de Soliman le Magnifique en Moldavie", promised on this occasion, was no longer published.

[87] It is true that our Turcologist has seriously nuanced this image: "en présence des diverses transformations politiques, des différentes idées et conceptions, qui s'entrechoquaient dans la Péninsule des Balkans et dans toute l'Europe orientale, il était naturel que la politique ottomane n'adoptât pas une attitude unique et une seule formule pour conquérir et exploiter les pays conquis. D'autres recherches auront à préciser néanmoins dans quelle mesure la partie des Pays Roumains qui ne se trouvait pas directement soumise à l'administration turque, était considérée territoire de conquête, selon les multiples nuances du droit musulman" (Guboglu, "*Inscription turque*," p. 187; Guboglu, "*Inscripția sultanului Suleiman*," p. 123).

[88] See, for example, M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, "La structure des relations turco-roumaines et des raisons de certains hüküms, ferman, berat et des ordres des sultans adréssés aux princes de la Moldavie et de la Valachie aux XVI[e] et XVII[e] siècles," *Belleten* 165–168 (1978): pp. 761–773.

[89] Cf. Gorovei, "Moldova," pp. 659–665.

[90] Gorovei, "Moldova," p. 664.

imal, that they do not entitle us to see the year 1538 as a *turning point*.[91] Yet, that does not mean that it was not a time of crisis, of terrible crisis.

Very recently, the author of an important study, lengthy and erudite,[92] has again reached the conclusion that the two Romanian Principalities were *conquered* during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, becoming an *integral part* of the Ottoman Empire.[93] As for our own opinion, we think that such a conclusion is not adequate in regard to everything that the non-Ottoman sources of the time relate, as well as in regard to later documentation. It is not adequate in regard to everything known so far – on the basis of some sources of undoubted authenticity and reliability – about the subsequent history of Romanian-Ottoman relations. On the other hand, the analogy with the situation of the Bulgarian and Serbian empires, and with that of the Hungarian kingdom too, makes it difficult to understand the very concept of a *conquest*.

It is true that after the campaign to Moldavia, new "letters of conquest" (*fetih-nâme-i Kara Boğdan*) were written. But such texts were drafted after the campaigns of 1476 and 1484 too. Besides, it is a well-known fact that after the failure of the first siege of Vienna, in 1529, Süleyman sent a "bulletin of victory" (10 November 1529) too.[94]

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[91] This quality could be ascribed, for example, to the reign of John the Terrible (1572–1574), who minted a coin according to the Ottoman monetary system, called *akçe* – cf. Gorovei, "Moldova", pp. 665–666. The same conclusion is reached as a result of the information collected by Paul Ricaut (1629–1700) at Istanbul, where he was the secretary of the British ambassador, the Earl of Winchelsea, and published in his book entitled *The History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1686), pp. 113–114: "*John* the *Vayvod* by treachery losing his life, this Province fell totally into the power of the *Turk*, and was united to his Empire in the year 1574". Analysis of the Ottoman monetary system and the extent to which the Romanian Principalities adopted it can lead to much more comprehensive conclusions, such as those formulated by Şevket Pamuk: "The Danubian Principalities were never fully incorporated into the Ottoman Empire but became vassal states paying regular tribute […]. These principalities were mostly independent in their internal affairs and did not adopt Ottoman institutions such as the *timar* land tenure system. As a rule, the Ottomans did not mint coins in Wallachia or Moldavia. Similarly, local rulers in Wallachia did not mint coins with their own name and those in Moldavia did so on a limited basis. This pattern can not be explained solely by reference to the absence of specie in these areas. Instead, the pattern is highly suggestive about both the extent and the limits of the autonomy enjoyed by these principalities during the Ottoman period" (Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 92).

[92] Panaite, "Legal and Political Status," pp. 9–42.

[93] Panaite, "Legal and Political Status," p. 42.

[94] Published by Joseph von Hammer; ed. fr.: *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours*, trans. J. J. Hellert, vol. 5 (Paris, 1836), pp. 457–460. See also the comment of Gilles Veinstein, "L'Europe et le Grand Turc," in Henry Laurens, John Tolan, Gilles Veinstein, *L'Europe et l'Islam. Quinze siècles d'histoire* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2009), p. 149.

In the inscription he made at the fortress raised at Tighina (Bender), on the River Dniester, the Sultan is called *fatih bildān-i Bugdanym*, "conqueror of Bugdan country".[95] Does this title reflect reality? The late Mihail Guboglu thought it did: "Ici" – he said – "le mot *fatih* ne peut être considéré comme un élément superflu, dû au style fleuri cher à la rhétorique orientale, car il exprime une certaine réalité historique. On ne saurait douter le moins du monde que cette conquête concerne directement toute la Moldavie, et non pas seulement quelques points d'appui [...]".[96] Is this assertion justified? Let us see.

A noble faction made up of Peter Rareş' political adversaries had called Süleyman to Moldavia. The conditions had already been established,[97] and we shall see that the Sultan observed them entirely. In fact, he really had a maximal plan: changing Moldavia into a *sanğaq* for one of his sons. Yet, he opted for the minimal plan: he gave the country a prince from its local dynasty, as the boyars had asked, observing, *pro forma*, even the boyars' right to electe. (Incidentally, elections were held with only one candidate). The vacuum of power lasted one week. Peter Rareş left the country on 14 September, the name of the new prince, the favourite of the Sultan, was announced on 18 September, and his acceptance and investiture took place on 21 September.

The city of Suceava, the heart of power, was surrendered without fighting, the day after Peter left the country. The Sultan sat there for one week. But no source – neither interior (Ottoman or Moldavian) nor external – reports that

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[95] Guboglu, "*Inscription turque*," pp. 184–185; Guboglu, "*Inscripţia sultanului Suleiman*," p. 119.

[96] Guboglu, "*Inscription turque*," p. 187, corrected through "*Inscripţia sultanului Suleiman*," p. 123: "Here the term *fatih* cannot be considered as a superfluous element of the flourished style of the Oriental rhetoric, because it expressed a certain historical reality. There is no doubt that this conquest refers directly to the entire Moldavia, not only to some point of support for the Turks [...]".

[97] *Petrum pro hoste haberet, dominio pelleret, alium vaivodam gentis suae virum illis praeficeret, a caede abstineret, fortunas non diriperet, regnum pro se non occuparet, uxores ac liberi essent inviolati et a captivitate tuti, suisque juribus, legibus ac fide uti sineret; tributa vero et dona pactis majorum suorum sancita acciperet, hisque contentus esset* ("to have Peter as enemy, to chase him away from the throne, to install another voivode, from among the men of his nation, not to kill them, not to plunder the estates, not to occupy the country for himself, the wives and children be protected from slavery, to let them use their rights, laws and faith, to receive the tribute and gifts <as they used to be> sanctioned through the agreements of their predecessors. And he should be contented with all of these"): Antonius Wrancius, "De rebus gestis Hungarorum. VI. De apparatu Joannis regis contra Solimanum caesarem in Transsylvaniam invadentem (1536–1538)," in *Monumenta Hungariae Historica*, *Scriptores*, vol. 2, ed. Szalay László (Pest, 1857), p. 77 (see also Antonius Wrancius Sibenicensis Dalmata, *Expeditionis Solymani in Moldaviam et Transsylvaniam libri duo. De situ Transsylvaniae, Moldaviae et Transalpinae liber tertius*, ed. Kálmán Eperjesy (Budapest, 1944), p. 5; also mentioned by Papacostea, "Tratatele Ţării Româneşti şi Moldovei," p. 102, note 17).

the Sultan changed the church of the city or the metropolitan church into a mosque, as would happen in 1541, when Buda was occupied. However, he made a very symbolic gesture of power: he looted the treasure of the country found in the underground hideaway of the walled city. But a quarter of a century after this event, the imperial agent Belsius learned from Moldavia that Süleyman had finally returned what he had taken from Suceava, just to retain the "good will" of the Moldavians.[98] Actually, the circumstances in which Peter Rareş regained reign deserve the attention of a separate study. According to the information Leunclavius collected, he was *restitutus in integrum*.[99]

One by one, the conclusions risk becoming clichés: pompous statements, rhetoric, and official phraseology on the one hand, and flattering, ironical, threatening and partisan statements[100] on the other. All of them are smoke screens beyond which we must peer to see the reality of the facts, and the texts known allow us to do so. They must be analysed attentively, always in the general context that generated them.

The transformation of Transylvania into a principality submitted to the Porte, ruled by the child king John Sigismund Zápolya, brought the three Carpathian Principalities under some kind of common denominator.[101] After the

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[98] *Nam et Suleymanus, cum hanc occupasset provinciam, omniam isthec integre in Socyauia restituit eoque facto beneuolentiam sub servitute restrinxit*: Hurmuzaki-Densușianu, *Documente*, vol. II, 1, p. 425, no. CCCXCIV. Romanian version: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române*, vol. 2, ed. Maria Holban (responsible editor), M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1970), p. 175 ("căci şi Soliman, când a ocupat această ţară, a restituit în întregime toate cele de acest fel din Suceava şi prin acest fapt a păstrat bunăvoinţa acestora, chiar subjugaţi").

[99] Ioannes Leunclavius, *Annales Sultanorum Othmanidarum a turcis sua lingua scripsit ...* (Frankfurt, 1588), p. 88.

[100] On 24 July 1537 he wrote to King Sigismund: *Istud regnum est supremi ac invictissimi imperatoris turcarum, domini nostri clementissimi, ac nobis concessit possidendum, vivat sua Caesarea Majestas!* (Hurmuzaki-Densușianu, *Documente*, vol. II, 1, p. 147, no. CXI). Romanian version: N. Iorga, *Scrisori de boieri, scrisori de domni*, second edition (Vălenii de Munte, 1925), p. 198 ("ţara aceasta e a preaînălţatului şi nebiruitului împărat turcesc, domnul meu cel preamilostiv, şi ne-a dat-o nouă s-o stăpânim: să trăiască Măria Sa împărătească !"). But the same day the ambassadors of Ferdinand of Habsburg, the King of the Romans, were reminded of the role of Moldavia in the defence against the infidels: *nos ab ista parte regni Majestati Regie fuimus ac sumus pro diffesione ut scutum, tam ex parte tartarorum, quam turcorum* (Hurmuzaki-Densușianu, *Documente*, vol. II, 1, p. 148, no. CXII). Translation: "we, those living in this part of the country of His Majesty the King, were and are for defence, like a shield, against the Tatars and against the Turks".

[101] "Sans doute, Moldavie, Valachie et Transylvanie partagent-elles désormais un même statut d'états vassaux et tributaires de l'empire, mais on discerne également des différences sensibles entre les traitements réservées à chacun d'eux..." (Berindei, Veinstein, *L'Empire Ottoman*, p. 13).

events from 1538–1541, the general state of things deteriorated, but the autonomy of the principalities remained rather large. In 1554, prince Alexander of Moldavia emphasised the better conditions which his country and Wallachia enjoyed, compared to Transylvania, where Süleyman insisted on imposing Zápolya and refused to receive the tribute that the Diet would have liked to send on behalf of Ferdinand of Austria.[102] Yet, after ten years, the truce which was being prepared between Emperor Maximilian II and the Sultan included special mention of the two Romanian princes: "in questa amicitia si comprendano li vaivodi di Bogdania et Valachia". The Sultan guaranteed that his Muslim officials and subjects would not cause any trouble, and neither "dalli *subiugati con la potentissima mia spada*, re Stefano, re di Transilvania, li vayvoda di Valachia et di Bogdania, et altri servitori nostri christiani tributarii, li quali sono inclusi in questa pace".[103] Ten years later, while announcing a change of reign in Moldavia, Selim II noted in the ending of a letter: *Regnum enim Moldaviae est nostrum ut Constantinopolis*.[104] *In cauda venenum...*

For the father, the status of Moldavia was the same as that of Bosnia and Smederevo; for the son, with that of Constantinople itself. Is the historian permitted to make these assertions solid premises for his reasoning? If the Porte recognized only the title of *King of Spain* to Charles V, and that of *King of Vienna* to Rudolph II, should the historian accept that the two Habsburgs were not emperors of the Holy Empire?

Thus, we return to what may be considered a *key problem* in the reconstruction, description and understanding of the Romanians' relations with the Porte: were Moldavia and Wallachia really conquered and included in the Empire of the Crescent, such as Constantinople, Bosnia and Smederevo? If such a conquest existed, then certainly, the question of "why the Turks did not conquer the Romanian Principalities"?[105] is pointless.

It would be important and useful to collect, from the texts of the time, the narratives to show us what the people themselves thought. We know such texts, but their presentation here is certainly impossible. It would perhaps be profit-

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[102] Hurmuzaki-Densușianu, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. II, 5 (Bucharest, 1897), pp. 178 and 180, no. LXXV.

[103] Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. VIII (Bucharest, 1894), p. 100, no. CXXXIII. As Professor Claudia Römer pointed out during the discussions that followed the presentation of this report, the respective clause was removed from the final form of the treaty. The case – which is not singular – is worth special attention.

[104] Hurmuzaki-Densușianu, *Documente*, vol. II, 1, p. 714, no. DCLXXXVIII.

[105] It is the title of an important study, published by P. P. Panaitescu in 1944 (*Revista Fundațiilor Regale* 5: pp. 293–304), reprinted in idem, *Interpretări românești. Studii de istorie economică și socială* (Bucharest: Universul, 1947), pp. 144–159; second edition, ed. Ștefan S. Gorovei and Maria Magdalena Székely (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1994), pp. 111–118.

able to "borrow" from Wallachia a text that seems eloquent. It comes from the most authorised representatives of the political class of Wallachia and it was not drafted for official political purposes in order to affirm a certain point of view. It is a letter sent in September 1599 by a group of Wallachian boyars, alarmed by the situation in their country and by the prospect of war against the Porte: *if now the Turks come here, to our country, they will dismount it* [= conquer it, take it into possession, reorganise it on another basis] *and will put a Turk to rule in our country, and will Islamize all the Christians, and will destroy the monasteries and churches, and lots of Christians will die*.[106] It is obvious that for the Romanian boyars at the end of the sixteenth century, their country, submitted and tributary to the Porte, was not at all a conquered land. The conquest[107] had to involve Ottoman administration, colonisation with Muslims, forced Islamization, dissolution of the monasteries and churches.[108]

One year earlier, on 4 August 1598, the peace between the Porte and Poland was renewed. One of the clauses of the treaty recognised the possibility of having a hereditary dynasty in Moldavia, provided the well-known obligations were respected.[109] This was without precedent in the history of this country.[110]

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[106] Ştefan Ştefănescu, "Ştiri noi cu privire la domnia lui Mihai Viteazul," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 5 (1962): p. 187; *Documente şi însemnări româneşti din secolul al XVI-lea* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1979), p. 111. The fragment with the verb "a descăleca" (to dismount), meaning *to found*, *to organise*, *to reorganise*, has been commented upon by Ştefan S. Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei. Probleme controversate* (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 1997), pp. 62–63.

[107] See also Halil Inalcik, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," *Studia Islamica* 2 (1954): pp. 103–129; Krassimira Moutafova, "On the Problem of the Ottoman Methods of Conquest (According to Neşri and Sultan Murad's Gazavatname)," Études balkaniques 2 (1995): pp. 64–81.

[108] Panaitescu, *Interpretări româneşti*, p. 113: "the country occupied by the Turks effectively became their property, the estates were changed into *timars* (Turkish military fiefs), some others into small estates of serfs belonging to a bey or sipahi. The Ottoman conquest meant the division of the entire land to the Turkish military colonists; all the population were in slavery and not only the nobility, the owners of land, disappeared, but also the freeholders, who were proud they could own a small plot of land. The entire nation became a people of slaves. We, the Romanians, have never been the Turks' slaves. The Turks have never been allowed to settle in our villages as land owners, and neither at the time of supreme humility in the eighteenth century was a mosque raised in our country".

[109] Mehmed, *Documente turceşti*, pp. 142–143, no. 150.

[110] The chance of an internationally recognised hereditary dynasty would arise again a century later. It would be promised to Constantine Cantemir, in 1690, by Emperor Leopold I (Andrei Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei şi Ţării Româneşti*, vol. 11 (Bucharest: Fundaţia "Regele Carol I", 1939), p. 401, no. 253), and then to Demetrius Cantemir, in 1711, by Peter the Great (cf. Maria Magdalena Székely, "Moldova lui Dimitrie Cantemir şi *Descrierea* ei," in *Dimitrie Cantemir. Perspective interdisciplinare*, ed. Bogdan Creţu (Iaşi: Institutul European, 2012), pp. 167–168). But the Moldavian boyars were hostile

Or, how could the existence of a Christian hereditary dynasty co-exist with the status of a conquered territory, like Constantinople, Bosnia or Smederevo? Neither must we forget that the renewal of the peace in 1598 came only a few years after the attempt of the Turks to change Moldavia into a province of the empire, a tentative measure that caused an immediate military response from Poland. An army commanded by chancellor Jan Zamoyski was sent to Moldavia. The conflict ended with a compromise between the two powers, which brought about the confirmation of Jeremy Movilă as prince of Moldavia, with the status of vassal of the Ottoman Empire.[111]

It would be ideal to have information from three sources – Ottoman, Romanian, and other – from as close a point in time as possible. Fortunately, we have such a collection of opinions from different sources, from a relatively short time span, dating from the last quarter of the seventeenth century. The Moldavian chronicler Ion Neculce (1672–1745) relates that in the very year he was born, before the conquest of the Polish city of Kamenec-Podolsk, a discussion took place between the vizier who commanded the army and a Moldavian boyar who had come to the Ottoman camp at his request, to assist and advise him. This boyar was none other than the most erudite Moldavian of the time, and very passionate about the history of his country: the chronicler Miron Costin, author of historical works in Latin, Polish, and Romanian. The vizier asked him what the Moldavians thought about the conquest of the Polish city: were they glad, or not? It was a terrible and very embarrassing question, especially for a notorious Polonophile like Costin. Very reticently, he said: *we, the Moldavians, rejoice in the extension of the empire all over the place and as much as possible, but we would not rejoice it were to extend over our country*.[112] The answer was appreciated and confirmed by the vizier: *you are right*.[113] Thus, both parties agreed that the Ottoman Empire did not include the principality of Moldavia at that time, just as the city of Kamenec-Podolsk had been included.

From 1677–1678, during the discussions caused by the intention of the Ottomans to occupy effectively Ragusa (Dubrovnik), its diplomats explained to the grand vizier Kara Mustafa that they were not *subjects* of the Sultan, but his *tributaries*: "Vi è gran differenza tra il essere suddito ed essere tributario.

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to the principle of heredity (Székely, "Moldova lui Dimitrie Cantemir," p. 168), a fact which places the failure of the "hereditary reign" granted to Movilă family, in 1598, in a new light.

[111] Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania. International Diplomacy on the European Periphery (15th–18th Century). A Study of Peace Treaties Followed by Annotated Documents* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2011), p. 111.

[112] Ion Neculce, *Opere. Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei şi O samă de cuvinte*, ed. Gabriel Ştrempel (Bucharest: Minerva, 1982), p. 221 ("Sintem noi moldovenii bucuroşi să să lăţască în toate părţili cât de mult, iar pesté ţara noastră nu ne pare biné să să lăţască").

[113] Neculce, *Opere*, p. 221 ("Drept ai grăit").

Vi sono molti e gran Prencipi, che sono tributarii ad altri Prencipi, ma non si possono dire essere sudditi". The inhabitants of Ragusa recognised that "siamo sottomessi al Gran Signore, ma raccommandatisi alla sua prottetione con offerta d'un annuo tributo [...] confermato a noi [...] d'athnama [*ahd-nâme*!], nella quale non s'asserisce in verun luogo che noi ci siamo soggettati a lui, ne che egli habbi lassato a noi libera la città". From the shores of the Adriatic Sea, the situation of the Danubian Principalities was seen somehow differently: "i Prencipi di Transilvania, di Vallachia e di Moldavia, i quali sono imediatamente creati dal Gran Signore e rimassi a voglia sua [...]".[114] Faced with the aggressive tendencies of the Porte, the inhabitants of Ragusa defended themselves with the same arguments as the Romanians,[115] pointing out that "the Protector cannot violate the contract of protection in regard to his tributaries". Things were seen quite differently from the banks of the Bosphorus: "Les sultans considéraient Dubrovnik et son petit territoire longeant le littoral adriatique comme partie intégrante de leur Empire et du *sanǧaq* d'Herzégovine même s'il bénéficiait d'une large autonomie."[116]

In essence, the inhabitants of Ragusa confirmed the fact that Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia were not provinces of the Ottoman Empire, rather they were under the Sultan's protection, in exchange for the annual tribute.[117] The main elements of this argument are also found in some of the texts referring to the Romanian Principalities.

A Frenchman known only as Sieur de la Croix, secretary and close collaborator of the Marquis de Nointel (representative of Louis XIV at the Porte), who was well acquainted with the situation of the Romanian Principalities he passed through on his way to Poland, wrote the following in 1676: "La Moldavie n'a point esté subjuguée par les Turcs, Bogdan Voda l'offrit & se soûmit volontairement à Mehemet II, d'où vient que les Turcs la nomment à present *Bogdan Vilayet*, *Bogdanie*. [...] Sultan Mehemet [...] lui accorda sa protection,

[114] Zdenko Zlatar, "Kara Mustapha and the Republic of Dubrovnik (1677–1678): A New Interpretation," *Balcanica* 8 (1977): p. 211; the document was held in the archives of Dubrovnik, *Lettere di Levante*, LXIII, 143'–148', 150–153.

[115] For the comparison between the status of Ragusa and that of Moldavia, see Faroqhi, *Ottoman Empire*, pp. 81–82.

[116] Boško I. Bojović, *Raguse (Dubrovnik) et l'Empire ottoman (1430–1520). Les actes impériaux ottomans en vieux-serbe de Murad II à Selim I^er* (Paris: Association Pierre Belon, 1998), p. 11.

[117] Very interesting in this regard is the observation of Pietro Busenello, who in 1744, during the "Phanariot regime" for the Romanian Principalities, distinguished between "tributary states, like Mingrelia, Georgia and Ragusa, confederate states (Crimea Tripolis, Tunis and Algiers) and states submitted, which the Porte allowed to redeem their autonomy through a tribute, a situation which the Venetian author recognises in Egypt and in the Danubian Principalities. It is not a juridical situation, but one imposed by practice: this is why the experts in law will look for it in vain in the official notes": Pippidi, "'Şoimii împărăteşti'," p. 15.

au moyen d'un tribut annuel arresté par les Capitulations, & le confirma dans tous les honneurs que l'on fait encore aujourd'hui au Beig de Moldavie au moment de sa reception à la Porte, & de son installlation dans la Principauté".[118] In the first part of this narrative there is the Moldavian "tradition", evoked at the beginning of our paper; the second part refers to the status of the country in its relations with the Porte. What today we call "key words" are *protection*, *tribute*, *capitulations*, *honors*. There is no mention of incorporation as provinces of the empire, as a result of a conquest.

In spite of the fact that, from the second half of the sixteenth-century onward, the Sultan called Moldavia and Wallachia *vilayets*, the Carpathian Principalities were not considered part of the Ottoman Empire. This fact can be also seen in the project of a Polish-Tatar treaty drafted in 1654, which stipulated that the princes of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia were to remain in friendly relations with the king of Poland and the Crimean Khan, all three of them being tributaries of the Sultan.[119]

A few decades later, during the preliminaries of the peace of Karlowitz, of January 1699, the Polish ambassadors insisted that the Ottoman Empire ceded to Poland, besides Podolia and Western Ukraine (lost in 1672 and now recuperated), the principality of Moldavia.[120] The request was rejected with the argument that the Sultan had no such authority over this country, since it had been submitted by its own accord, not conquered by sword.[121] That same cen-

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[118] Franz Babinger, "O relaţiune neobservată despre Moldova sub domnia lui Antonie vodă Ruset," *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secţiunii Istorice* s. III, 19 (1937): p. 123. Romanian version: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române*, vol. 7, ed. Maria Holban (responsible editor), M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1980), p. 256 ("Moldova n-a fost subjugată de turci. Bogdan vodă a oferit-o şi s-a supus de bună voie lui Mehmet al II-lea; de aceea turcii o numesc acum Bogdan-Vilayet – Bogdania. [...] Sultanul Mehmet [...] i-a acordat protecţia sa în schimbul unui tribut anual, stabilit pe baza capitulaţiilor şi l-a confirmat în toate onorurile care se dau chiar şi astăzi beiului Moldovei în momentul când este primit la Poartă şi la instalarea lui în domnie").

[119] "[…] the Transylvanian prince Rákóczi, as well as the Moldavian hospodar and the Wallachian hospodar, remain in the established friendship with His illustrious Majesty, the king of Poland, and his states, and all the three ones are tributaries of His illustrious Majesty, the Turkish emperor, then the free tsar, His Majesty, the Crimean khan, should regard them as his friends…" (Kołodziejczyk, *Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, p. 970, no. 61; see also p. 166).

[120] Rifa'at A. Abou-El-Haj, "Ottoman Diplomacy at Karlowitz," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 4 (1967): pp. 498–512.

[121] Neculce, *Opere*, p. 396 ("Leşii încă cerea taré Ţara Moldovei, dar turcei au răspunsu pentru Ţara Moldovei că Ţara Moldovei nu pot să o dè, să le fie lor podani [= supusă], că este volnică; că turcilor îi închinată, nu-i luată cu sabia"). The essence of the answer given by the representatives of the Porte at Karlowitz is confirmed by Ottoman documents of the previous

tury, an Ottoman chronicler, Hüseyin Hezarfenn, wrote that the tribute was of two sorts: one paid by the "giaours" from the countries really conquered, and the other one paid by the "giaours" from Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania who live in peace and good understanding with the Sultan.[122]

We must add that the Romanians themselves had also begun to be afraid of the success of the Holy League, after the liberation of Vienna: a letter dated September 1688 illustrates the Orthodox fear of the possibility that after their release from the Turks they might be forced to adopt the Roman Catholic confession and see their monasteries and churches changed into Catholic places of worship.[123]

The same Sieur de la Croix, whose words we have already mentioned, had explained in 1675 – and he was in a good position to provide this explanation[124] – why the Romanian Principalities were not turned into real provinces of the Ottoman Empire. While looking for answers to the question of *why the Turks did not conquer the Romanian Principalities*, this explanation was noticed late and only in passing.[125] Here it is in its entirety: "Les Turcs plusieurs fois ont mis en deliberation de faire gouverner ces deux provinces par des pachas, au prejudice de leurs promesses, mais elle n'a point eu d'effet, ayant considere qu'ils tirent beaucoup plus de ces gouverneurs cretiens qu'ils ne feroient des Turcs et que ceux-là, outre le tribut annuel, leur fournissent tous les trois ans une somme si considerable pour leur confirmation […]".[126] This observation

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century. Thus, Sultan Murat III affirmed, in August 1585, that *Moldavia is not part of the House of Islam* (Mihai Maxim, "L'autonomie de la Moldavie et de la Valachie dans les actes officiels de la Porte, au cours de la seconde moitié du XVI[e] siècle," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 2 (1977): p. 210, reprinted in idem, *L'Empire ottoman au nord du Danube et l'autonomie des Principautés Roumaines au XVI[e] siècle. Études et documents* (Istanbul: Isis, 1999).

[122] Mihai Maxim, "Recherches sur les circonstances de la majoration du kharaj de la Moldavie entre les années 1538 et 1574," *Association Internationale d'Études du Sud-Est Européen. Bulletin* 2 (1972): pp. 236–237, reprinted in idem, *L'Empire ottoman au nord du Danube*, p. 188.

[123] *Relaţiile istorice dintre popoarele U.R.S.S. şi România în veacurile XV – începutul celui de-al XVIII-lea / Исторические связи народов СССР и Румынии в XV – начале XVIII в*, ed. I. Grosul, A. C. Oţetea, A. A. Novoselski, L. V. Cerepnin (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), pp. 84–93, no. 27.

[124] The information Sieur de la Croix provided is worth analysis together with that of Paul Ricaut, since it was collected from the same environment and dates from the same period.

[125] Mihai Maxim, *Ţările Române şi Înalta Poartă. Cadrul juridic al relaţiilor româno-otomane în Evul Mediu* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1993), p. 130 (study "Cadrul istoric: de ce n-au cucerit turcii Ţările Române ?,": pp. 111–142).

[126] N. Iorga, *Acte şi fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor, adunate din depozitele de manuscrise ale Apusului*, vol. 2 (Bucharest, 1896), pp. 736–737. Romanian version: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române*, vol. 7, p. 254 ("Turcii de mai multe ori au pus în discuţie trecerea cârmuirii acestor două provincii unor paşale, în ciuda făgăduielilor lor, dar aceasta nu a avut urmări, căci ei au socotit că scot mult mai mult de la aceşti guvernatori creştini decât <ceea

is also supported by some rather recent research. Şevket Pamuk, a renowned expert on Ottoman economic history, reached the conclusion that "in many remote areas, such as Eastern Anatolia, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Wallachia (Romania), Moldavia, and the Maghrib, the Ottomans collected taxes but left the existing land regimes largely or completely unaltered to avoid economic disruption and popular unrest. The central government might not have had the fiscal, administrative, and economic resources to establish a new system in these areas, anyway".[127] The Romanian historian Bogdan Murgescu emphasised, in his turn, "the incapacity of the Ottoman political factors to effectively control the economic processes inside the Ottoman world", with unavoidable consequences in the field of the political relations between the Danubian Principalities and the Empire.[128] The profitability of the indirect administration through local princes (later Phanariots or entirely Greeks) was accepted by the researchers with some important nuances which do not touch the essence of the matter.[129] After all, fiscal exploitation was more profitable that direct occupation ...[130]

To the *economic* reason, of a pragmatic nature, was added the *geopolitical* one, the important of which must be revisited if not reassessed, and which P. P. Panaitescu summed up as follows: "The Romanian Principalities were not in the main direction of the Turkish conquest, they occupied a position adjacent to this line".[131] Today we believe we can suggest a third reason, seen from the perspective of the mediaeval ideology of power.

Following the same line as Franz Babinger, in 1960 Halil İnalcık drew attention to a possible "significant aspect in Mehmed's conquests: reunification around Istanbul of the old Byzantine territories which were portioned under the local dynasties".[132] Şerban Papacostea also mentioned in 1973 "the fact that

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ce> ar scoate de la <nişte guvernatori> turci, şi că aceia [= domnii creştini] le dau în afară de tributul anual, la trei ani pentru confirmarea în domnie, o sumă atât de mare de bani...").

[127] Şevket Pamuk, "Institutional Change and the Longevity of the Ottoman Empire, 1500–1800," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2 (2004): p. 230.

[128] Bogdan Murgescu, "Comerţ şi politică în relaţiile româno-otomane (secolele XVI–XVIII)," in idem, *Ţările Române între Imperiul Otoman şi Europa creştină* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2012), p. 184.

[129] Maxim, *Ţările Române*, pp. 131–133. See also Mihai Maxim, *O istorie a relaţiilor româno-otomane, cu documente noi din arhivele turceşti*, vol. 1. *Perioada clasică (1400–1600)* (Brăila: Istros, 2012), pp. 15–31 (study "De ce n-au fost transformate Ţările Române în provincii otomane ?").

[130] Keith Hitchins, "Ottoman Domination of the Moldavia and Wallachia in the Sixteenth Century," in *Asian Studies One. A Collection of Papers on Aspects of Asian History and Civilization*, ed. Balkrishna G. Gokhale (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1966): p. 132.

[131] Panaitescu, *Interpretări româneşti*, p. 117.

[132] Halil Inalcik, "Mehmed the Conqueror (1432–1481) and His Time," *Speculum* 3 (1960): p. 422.

the 'Byzantine idea' played a certain role in the programme of conquests of Mehmed II",[133] bringing a confirmation (datable after 1453) from Western Europe: Genovese diplomatic instructions, the authors of which accepted that *nos non fuisse miratos si pro terris que quondam fuerunt sub Imperio Grecorum Excellentia Sua* [= *Rex Turcorum*] *tributum aliquando petiit*.[134] Thus, as soon as Constantinople fell, Europe suspected that Mehmed would first of all seek everything that had belonged to the Byzantine Empire. In fact, as early as 1454, the Venetian Niccolò Sagundino announced that Mehmed's claims, based on the conquest of the New Rome, still focused on the Old Rome: wasn't Constantinople a daughter of Rome?[135]

In the disembarkation in Italy, in 1480, which would cause the "Crusade of Otranto", arguments of this kind seem to have played a certain role, having been conveyed from Venice through Battista Gritti, recently appointed ambassador of the Serenissima in Istanbul: "la Signoria, per mezzo del suo nuovo bailo a Stambul, Battista Gritti, fece dire al sultano che egli era nel suo pieno diritto se s'impadroniva di Brindisi, Taranto e Otranto, poiché, in qualità di colonie greche, quei territori erano parti dell'ex impero di Bisanzio, che spettava in tutta la sua estensione a lui quale imperatore di Costantinopoli. Fino a qual punto dichiarazioni di questo genere abbiano contribuito all'attuazione della decisione, già da tempo presa, di metter piede su suolo italiano è naturalmente impossibile di scoprire...".[136] An answer to or an echo of Franz Babinger's final observation was given by the very leader of the expedition of 1480, Gedik Ahmet pasha. He asked the king of Aragon to surrender to him "the entire principality of Taranto, which used to belong to the Byzantine Empire, but [...] had been lost by the same more than three centuries before".[137]

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[133] Şerban Papacostea, "Die politischen Voraussetzungen für die wirtschaftliche Vorherrschaft des Osmanischen Reiches im Schwarzmeergebiet (1453–1484)," *Münchner Zeitschrift für Balkankunde,*" 1 (1978): p. 219, note 7 ("daß die 'byzantinische' Idee eine gewisse Rolle im Eroberungsprogramm Mehmeds II. gespielt [...]"). The Romanian version of this study was not published until two decades later: "Premisele politice ale hegemoniei economice a Imperiului Otoman în spaţiul Mării Negre (1453–1484)," *Revista Istorică* (serie nouă) 1–2 (1999): p. 15, note 7.

[134] N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XV^e^ siècle* (Bucharest 1915), p. 79, no. I. It was a concession to the Sultan, *si vero rex ipse aut sui ullum sermonem facerent de censu seu tributo propter Capham et allias terras maris pontici persolvendo*.

[135] Franz Babinger, *Maometto il Conquistatore e il suo tempore* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi editore, 1957), pp. 726–727.

[136] Babinger, *Maometto il Conquistatore*, pp. 579–580.

[137] Ştefan Andreescu, "Cu privire la ultima fază a raporturilor dintre Moldova şi Genova," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie şi Arheologie 'A. D. Xenopol'* 19 (1982): p. 211 (quoted: Ernesto Pontieri, *Per la storia del regno di Ferrante I d'Aragon, re di Napoli* (Naples, [1947]), p. 203). Andreescu notes: "Thus, it would be possible that Serenissima itself provided this historical

As for Moldavia, we can wonder whether in 1484 the Porte was content to take only the merchant cities together with their surrounding territory, wishing for this very "succession", since the old Byzantine *Parathalassia* was there.[138] It is also possible that the territory taken from Moldavia in 1538, situated in the north of the zone occupied in 1484, evoked the old Tatar occupation in this area, insofar as "Tatar graves built in stone, with inscriptions"[139] were searched for there. Besides, these were not the only successions the sultans had in view. For example, Mehmed II affirmed his right to the succession of Stephen Lazarević (1389–1427), in competition with the despot George Branković.[140] It is quite possible that a historian has studied this "political and ideological concept" of the successions adopted by the sultans once they had effectively conquered a Christian state, but we are certainly not aware of any.[141]

Yet, we mention again, in this context, the relationship between Moldavia and the Hungarian kingdom. Its submission *gladio nostro imperiali acutissimo* (as Süleyman the Magnificent would say in 1555[142]) would make the Sultan the successor to the king who died at Mohács. He considers himself the ruler of Hungary and in this capacity would also regulate the situation of Transylvania, as is well known.[143] But, having been successor to the king of Hungary, as one

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argument to the Turks. However, the fact that they took it over and used it proves that it was included in a political and ideological concept which [the Ottomans] had assumed and consciously applied" (Andreescu, "Ultima fază," p. 211, note 49).

[138] Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Câteva însemnări pentru istoria relaţiilor româno-otomane în veacurile XV–XVI," in *Românii în istoria universală*, vol. 1, ed. I. Agrigoroaiei, Gh. Buzatu, V. Cristian (Iaşi: Universitatea "Al. I. Cuza", 1986), p. 39. It is very interesting to note that, although conquered in 1484, the two merchant cities were submitted to tribute only after the conclusion of the peace with Moldavia, in 1486: Nicoară Beldiceanu, "La Moldavie ottomane à la fin du XV^{e} siècle et au début du XVI^{e} siècle," *Revue des Études Islamiques* 2 (1969): p. 263. It was also then that the frontier of this "Ottoman Moldavia", listed in a document on the delimitation of the frontiers (*sınur-nâme*), was settled: Tahsin Gemil, "Quelques observations concernant la conclusion de la paix entre la Moldavie et l'Empire Ottoman (1486) et la délimitation de leur frontière," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 3 (1983): pp. 235–238.

[139] Corfus, *Documente*, p. 32, no. 25; Gorovei, "Câteva însemnări," p. 39.

[140] Inalcik, "Mehmed the Conqueror," p. 416.

[141] For the various aspects and forms of the Byzantine legacy in the territories the Turks conquered, see Speros Vryonis Jr.: "The Byzantine Legacy and Ottoman Forms," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23–24 (1969–1970): pp. 251–308.

[142] Hurmuzaki-Densuşianu, *Documente*, vol. II, 5, p. 289, no. CXIX: *regiones Hungaricae et partes Transsylvanicae, cum omnibus appendicibus, acquivisimus gladio nostro imperiali acutissimo, ita ut nunc connumerentur inter alias nostras regiones imperatorias* (*apud Monumenta Hungariae Historica*, *Scriptores*, vol. 5). It is the answer of Süleymanto the message Ferdinand sent him through Auger de Busbecq, on 10 regeb 962 H. (31 May 1555).

[143] It was well known as early as March 1540 that Stephen Mailat and Emeric Balassa wanted to separate Transylvania from Hungary, "to rule it with the help of and in good understanding

who had taken on at least one part of the "Hungarian legacy",[144] he had to take on his role of suzerain of the Romanian princes too, a role listed in the old Hungarian-Ottoman treaties and which had already caused difficulties upon the treaty's renewal in 1503.[145] Now, the Ottoman "protector" took the place of the Christian suzerain too.

Could such a reason that related Moldavia to the kingdom of Saint Stephen provide a key to the formula Süleyman used in 1531? Or, in general, to interpret the development after 1538–1541 more logically? Was this the conclusion Peter Rareş reached then, during his second reign, after hesitating in his first, when looking for a Christian suzerain to equilibrate the Ottoman "protectorate"? An entire chapter of the history of the political ideas in the Romanian lands may be analysed in this regard.[146] In fact, we must remember that in the sixteenth–nineteenth centuries, in their claims to the territories beyond the Carpathians, the Habsburgs invoked their very capacity as successors of the kings of Hungary, the old suzerains of these countries.

Much can be written on the subject, perhaps much more than a single book, and much discussion is required in order to dissect the individual sources. We must limit ourselves to presenting opinions and controversies concerning the beginning of Moldavia's relations with the Porte (an event for which we retain the dating of 1455–1456), as well as some landmarks for the chronological setting

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with the Turk, paying tribute every year, just like the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia" (*Verum quamplurimi affirmant Maylatum cum collega suo Balassa tyrannide Transilvaniam invasurum, disurumque ab Hungaria, et in ea, instar vaivodae Moldavi et Transalpini, quotannis pendendo tributum, Turcae auxilio et consensu dominaturum*): Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. II, 4 (Bucharest, 1894), p. 218, no. CXXIII (*apud Monumenta Hungariae Historica*, *Scriptores*, vol. 9, p. 83).

144 Cf. Octavian Tătar, "Disputa habsburgo-otomană din anii 1550–1551 pe seama 'moştenirii ungare'. Atitudinea sultanului Süleyman I," *Annales Universitatis Apulensis*, *Series Historia* 10/I (2006): pp. 25–35.

145 "The Sultan did not want to agree, because it seemed to him it was not an honour for His Majesty that a person who had to pay him tribute, did not have to recognise him directly as his superior, and neither did he believe it was in keeping with his dignity that a tributary of his be named in a treaty on the king's side": I. Ursu, Ştefan cel Mare şi turcii (Bucharest: Editura şi Institutul de Arte Grafice C. Sfetea, 1914), p. 173 (quoted: "Relazione di A[ndrea] Gritti, oratore a Bajezid", published by Albèri, *Le relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti*, serie III, vol. 3, p. 29).

146 We do not know anything about such an approach concerning Ragusa, which was in an identical situation: having been under the suzerainty of the Hungarian kingdom since 1358, in 1442 it agreed to send the Sultan an annual gift of 1,000 Venetian ducats, and later, in 1458 agreed to tribute payment (increased to 1,500 ducats) and to pay 2% of its customs revenue – Bojović, *Raguse (Dubrovnik)*, pp. 11, 25, 30, 190–194 (doc. no. 4), 195–199 (doc. nos. 5, 6, 7).

of these relations.[147] We raised questions to which no acceptable or convincing answers have been provided and we formulated hints of answers to questions never asked. Our approach does not prove that the principality of Moldavia was ever the object of an Ottoman *conquest* or that it was ever transformed into an Ottoman *province* – neither in the time of Süleyman the Magnificent, nor at any other time. Properly speaking, as Suraiya Faroqhi notes, the differences between the Ottoman governors, the semi-independent and the dependent rulers, and independent princes were and continued to be crucial for modern historians, especially for those looking for the roots of the nation states. But in the sultans' view, these differences were not as important, at least at the level of discourse.[148]

The status of Moldavia within the *Ottoman Commonwealth* is definable, *grosso modo*, through *dār al-ʿahd*. No matter how much pressure was exerted or how much abuse was committed in all fields in the course of time, especially in the time of general crisis, including territorial amputation, no matter how great and arbitrary the requirements were, Moldavia remained in the circle "le plus extérieur, le plus éloigné de la capitale et le plus difficile à contrôler",[149] only as state paying *haraç* (*kharadjgüzar*),[150] forced to participate in the Sultan's campaigns, in time of war, and to answer the imperial requests for food,[151] and for raw materials,[152] with dimensions extremely variable from one stage to another.

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[147] Cf. also Ștefan Andreescu, "Limitele cronologice ale dominaţiei otomane în Ţările Române," *Revista de Istorie* 3 (1974): pp. 399–412.

[148] Faroqhi, *Ottoman Empire*, p. 76.

[149] Veinstein, "Europe et le Grand Turc," p. 161.

[150] Veinstein, "Europe et le Grand Turc," p. 162: "La Moldavie et la Valachie ne sont que des pays tributaires (*kharadjgüzar*) du sultan. Ils conservent leur organisation sociale, dominée par l'aristocratie des boyards, et leurs institutions propres, à commencer par leurs princes, les voïévodes, et leur hiérarchie religieuse. Leurs territoires respectifs – au terme des amputations successives réalisées par les Turcs à des fins stratégiques – sont fermés à toute présence officielle ottomane (qu'il s'agisse d'agents civils, notamment fiscaux; de garnisons ou de représentants du culte musulman)".

[151] Gheorghe I. Brătianu, "Études sur l'approvisionnement de Constantinople et le monopole du blé à l'époque byzantine et ottomane," in idem, *Études byzantines d'histoire économique et sociale* (Paris: Libraire Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1938), pp. 172–177 (Romanian edition, "Studii asupra aprovizionării Constantinopolului și monopolul grâului în epoca bizantină și otomană," in idem, *Studii bizantine de istorie economică și socială*, trad. Alexandru-Florin Platon, ed. Ion Toderașcu and Alexandru-Florin Platon (Iași: Polirom, 2003), pp. 153–157); Bogdan Murgescu, "Au exportat Ţara Românească și Moldova cereale în secolul al XVI-lea ?," in idem, *Ţările Române*, pp. 236–243; Bogdan Murgescu, "Ponderea cerealelor românești în comerțul european (secolele XVI–XX)," in idem, *Ţările Române*, pp. 244–250.

[152] Faroqhi, *Ottoman Empire*, p. 95. As regards the so called "Ottoman commercial monopoly": Bogdan Murgescu, "Avatarurile unui concept: monopolul comercial otoman asupra Ţărilor Române," in idem, *Ţările Române*, pp. 151–172.

It is true that this status appears ambiguous sometimes (it did not seem easy to understand even for the people of the time), but it seems certain that today it could not be defined by only relating it to "the multiple nuances of the Muslim law".[153] One should take into account – to paraphrase Andrei Pippidi – *not the juridical discussions, but those imposed by practice, that the specialists in law will look for in vain in the official registering*.[154]

Why did the Turks not conquer the Romanian Principalities? The question is waiting for an answer that can only be polyvalent. But in essence, it is possible to have some overlaps and crossings of interests, dictated, from one stage to another, by the pragmatism highlighted by scholars of Ottoman history: "Toute appréciation de la politique de cet empire qui ferait abstraction de ce facteur aurait [...] peu de chances de tomber juste".[155]

[153] We are a little reticent to discuss the status of the Romanian Principalities towards the Porte only from the perspective of the Islamic religious doctrines, because this can lead to risky observations, such as: "there is no jurisprudential or historical support to sustain the idea of the Romanian countries as a component of the *dār al-'ahd* territories during the 16th century or at any other time" (Cătălina Hunt, "The Romanian Lands in the Sixteenth Century: Their Juridical Status According to Ottoman Law," in *Enjeux politiques, économiques et militaires en Mer Noire (XIVe–XXIe siècles)*, p. 413). Such a unilateral view can generate the simplest of conclusions ("When the Ottomans were at war with the Romanians, the latter became *harbī* (enemies) of the empire. When relations were peaceful, they were suddenly transformed into *dhimmī* (internal subjects)": Hunt, "The Romanian Lands," p. 414), which should call into question the political relations of the Ottoman Empire with all the other states, both in time of peace and of war.

[154] Pippidi, "'Şoimii împărăteşti'," p. 15.

[155] Berindei, Veinstein, *L'Empire Ottoman*, p. 13.

The Ottoman Conquest of Bosnia in 1463 as Interpreted by Bosnian Franciscan Chroniclers and Historiographers (A Historic(Al) Event With Political and Psychological Ramifications That Are Still Present Today)

Dubravko Lovrenović

"Given the historiographical division of the history of the Turkish Empire into its classical era (when it was on the rise) and its decadent period (a time of decline), it is easy to understand the two traditions, the two different reflexes that remain in the psyche of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Islamized part of the Bosnian populace had an Islamic world-view and became the guardian of Islamic civilizational and cultural traditions. This part of the population, which was socially and culturally privileged during the Turkish period, constructed its individuality and identity in the context of Islamic anthropology, and preserved the memory of and reverence for the period during which the Turkish state was at its empire-building and civilizational peak, when mediaeval Christianity was replaced in Bosnia by eastern, Islamic urbanization and Islamic civilization in general. The non-Islamized part of the populace, on the other hand, retained uncomfortable memories of the decadent period, or rather the decadent aspect of Turkish rule, which it increasingly experienced as alien and oppressive [...] The confessional world of that time became deeply entrenched in its own stagnant anthropology and static world view. The resulting population structure in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the final and most deeply-rooted outcome of Turkish rule in Bosnia."[1]

It is hardly surprising that an event such as the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia in 1463, with all its long-lasting consequences of a political, cultural and religious nature, should have found a place in Franciscan chronicles and historiography. The Franciscan interpretative model, strongly influenced by centuries of folk tradition, describes the event as a historic caesura between freedom and subjugation. This markedly confessional, black-and-white view of a historic event is

[1] Srećko M. Džaja, *Katolici u Bosni i zapadnoj Hercegovini na prijelazu iz 18. u 19. stoljeće. Doba fra Grge Ilijića Varešanina (1783–1813)* (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1971), p. 225.

deeply imbued with romantic, pragmatic, patriotic and apologetic discourse. The Ottomans were intruders who destroyed the centuries-old Kingdom of Bosnia and its ruling dynasty, the personification of national and religious freedom, and were able to do so with the help of traitors. This treachery, viewed through the lens of assertions by the papal legate in Bosnia in 1463, Bishop Nicholas of Modruš, was also painted in confessional colours: it was perpetrated by the Bosnian "Bogomils", "Manichees" or "Patarenes" – heretics who had torn the country's religious unity apart, making it easy prey. This fictitious account is the basis on which the equally fictitious stories of Bogomil mass conversions to Islam were constructed.

Fundamentally static, the outcome of the Catholic Church's mediaeval theological stance that there is no salvation outside the Church, and that Islam therefore cannot be a religion of salvation, meaning that Muslims are apostates from the one true faith, the Christian (Catholic) Franciscan interpretation of the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia in 1463 came to occupy a "cultic" position in shaping the historical and socio-psychological structures of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Catholics (later identified as Croats). Throughout the centuries they have demonstrated strong and vivid awareness of this caesura and even some political plans were made to restore the Bosnian Kingdom.[2]

1. THE CURRENT STATE OF HISTORIOGRAPHY ON THE YEAR 1463

The fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia to the Ottoman Empire in 1463 is one of those events that are not merely remembered, but the impact of which is felt for generations. After such an epochal event, things would never be the same again. Clearly, historians have therefore taken a keen interest in these turbulent times and the many actors who were swept up in them, and there is an abundance of documentary material allowing us to reconstruct what actually happened.

The events of May and June 1463, when the army of Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror launched their *blitzkrieg* on Bosnia and overran the country, were the outcome of many interconnected internal and external events. Bosnia's military and political collapse of 1463 was the final act in a process that began in 1386, when the Bosnian sword and the Ottoman sabre first clashed. The fall of Bosnia to the Ottomans took almost eighty years, but the fable that Bosnia "fell with a whisper" still enjoys currency.

Bosnia was ill prepared for the lightning strike by the strongest military force of the day, perhaps because of the cease-fire negotiated in March 1463

[2] More on this in below.

by the Sultan and envoys of King Stjepan Tomašević. With or without the cease-fire, Bosnia's fate was sealed, for although the Sultan encountered resistance here and there, especially at Bobovac, it did not prevent him from taking not only Bobovac itself and Jajce, but also about seventy other forts or walled towns, or indeed from subjugating most of the country: the crown lands of central Bosnia, the Pavlović and Kovačević lands and part of Hum, probably as far as the line from Gacko via Nevesinje and Ljubuški to Primorje, the Adriatic littoral. There was fierce fighting over Bobovac, which the Turks pounded day and night while its garrison mounted a heroic defence. The news was relayed to the *knez* (executive magistrate) of Trogir by Nikola Testa, whom King Stjepan Tomašević had sent from Jajce to Venice to convey the latest news to the authorities and to procure military equipment. Testa reached Trogir on 29 May 1463, and told the magistrate that Bobovac could not hold out much longer unless the Hungarians or others came to its aid. The Turkish chronicler Dursun-bey, who witnessed the events, also wrote of the fierce fighting and *exceptionally great bloodshed* that accompanied the siege of Bobovac, describing its conquest as *a brilliant success for Islam*. The extent of the disarray is vividly illustrated by the decisions of the Ragusan authorities between 6 June and 23 July 1463 to allow *herceg* Stjepan, Ivaniš Vlatković and queens Maria and Katarina of Bosnia to come to Dubrovnik, where King Stjepan Tomašević himself was also welcomed. While "an esteemed kingdom burned before the eyes of the world," many people, from anonymous common folk to feudal magnates and crowned heads, were forced into exile. Among them was Fr. Juraj Dragišić (1445–1520), known as *Georgius Benignus*, who earned a reputation as a European scholar in exile.

Except for the alleged betrayal by "the Manichee Radak", Pope Pius II's account of the events of May and June 1463 and the capture of Bobovac by the Turks reflects the facts. The Polish chronicler Długosz related that the Sultan assembled a vast army, but so discreetly that no one realized what his intentions were. After taking the island of Lesbos, he launched his attack on Bosnia with such rapidity that news of his victories preceded awareness of the outbreak of hostilities. On 18 June 1463 the Venetian magistrate in Trogir reported that the Sultan and his army had left Bosnia, and calm was restored so quickly that on 21 July 1463 Ragusan merchants were allowed to go to Bosnia without their wares.

Along with the human casualties, destruction, plundering and deportations described by Dursun-bey, the greatest loss for the Kingdom of Bosnia as it breathed its last was the death of King Stjepan Tomašević, who was tricked into falling into Ottoman hands while fleeing and held prisoner in Ključ before being executed in Jajce on the Sultan's orders. Another blow to the Bosnian dynasty came when Sigismund and Katarina, King Tomaš's and Queen

Katarina Kosača's children, fell into the hands of the Turks, preventing them from claiming the Kotromanić crown after the death of the king. The rightful successors were still Queens Maria and Katarina, but they had left Bosnia and there was little chance that they would join the struggle for the throne.

The Kingdom of Bosnia was thus wiped from the political map of Europe, and the papal legate in Bosnia, Bishop Nicholas of Modruš, lost no time in putting about the idea that it was a "Manichaean" (later interpreted as Bogomil) betrayal that caused the kingdom to fall, a notion that Pope Pius II included in his *Commentaries*. The only other person to refer to a betrayal was King Matthias of Hungary, in a letter of 27 January 1464 to Pope Pius II, in which he said that the Sultan had been invited to Bosnia by traitors and had taken the kingdom without even drawing his sword, wearing down the king by artful cunning rather than by force of arms and then killing him, and accepting the surrender all the kingdom's forts and military equipment. It is difficult to determine which came first, Bishop Nicholas's assertions or those of Matthias Corvinus, but what is known is that by mid July 1463 – when the main Turkish strike against Bosnia had barely subsided – Bishop Nicholas of Modruš was in Dubrovnik as the Hungarian king's emissary. Over the next few months, for instance in Venice on 13 October 1463, he again featured in that same capacity. It seems reasonable to assume that Bishop Nicholas may have convinced Matthias Corvinus that betrayal was the main reason for the fall of Bosnia in 1463. Further support for this theory may be found in a letter of 24 June 1463 from the magistrate of Trogir to Venice, stating that Bosnia did not merely fall without a single cannon shot, but even "without a single sword being drawn from its scabbard." Having been a close observer of these events, the seasoned Venetian diplomat made no mention of betrayal in his writings. All this confirms that "not one Turkish campaign against Bosnia, of which there were many, relied on Patarene collaboration." Dursun-bey himself said that "this spacious land [of Bosnia] with its towns and forts became part of the conquests earned by the blood-stained imperial scimitar."[3]

Despite protestations of support, it was unrealistic for Bosnia to expect any kind of military support from the West, whether nearby or more remote, for the politically fragmented countries of the West were busy squabbling among themselves and, notwithstanding their proclamations, had no such mission in mind, nor could they have. Corroded from within by its own convulsions, subverted by the destructive conduct of the rulers of Hungary who, by holding the

[3] See Dubravko Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti (Sveta kruna ugarska i Sveta kruna bosanska 1387–1463)* (Zagreb-Sarajevo: Synopsis, 2006), p. 351 passim, with sources and reference works.

Bishop of Bosnia within their own sphere of influence, prevented the country from achieving political stability, subject to the constant military and economic ravages inflicted by the Turks, abandoned by the Catholic West, Bosnia succumbed to the superior might of the Ottomans.[4]

Long after 1463, after the fall in 1527 of the Hungarian Banate of Jajce, the whole of what had once been the Kingdom of Bosnia became part of the Ottoman Empire, under the Bosnian pashaluk. And then began the era of for or against the Ottomans.

2. BOSNIAN FRANCISCAN CHRONICLERS ON THE YEAR 1463: FROM THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FOJNICA CHRONICLE TO FILIP LASTRIĆ (1700–1783)

Only two of the twenty or so Bosnian Franciscan chroniclers and historians – Fr. Antun Knežević (1834–1889) and Vjenceslav Vlajić (1899–1950) – have dealt directly with the fall of Bosnia to the Ottomans in 1463; and they published their accounts of the event in 1886 and 1926, when the Ottomans had already left Bosnia.[5] A poem entitled "Suze Bošnjaka nad grobnicom svoga kralja u Jajcu – Poslije 401. godine robstva njegova" (Bosniacs weep over the tomb of their king in Jajce, after 401 years of slavery) was published in *Danica ilirska* in Zagreb in 1865, but anonymously, as was *Krvava knjiga ili spomenik na 405 godina poslije propasti slavnoga kraljevstva bosanskoga* (Book of blood, commemorating the 405th anniversary of the fall of the glorious Kingdom of Bosnia), published in Zagreb in 1869.[6] Everything else that has survived in Franciscan chronicles and historiography relating to this event is to be found in the context of wider-ranging historical observations. The fact which should be taken into consideration is that there is not even one witness to that event among the Franciscan chroniclers who wrote about 1463, rather everything is based on the contaminated tradition which was passed on from onegen-

[4] See Emir Filipović, "Historiografija o padu Bosanskog Kraljevstva", in: *Stjepan Tomašević (1461–1463) – slom srednjovjekovnoga Bosanskog Kraljevstva. Zbornik radova sa Znanstvenog skupa održanog 11. i 12. XI. 2011. godine u Jajcu* (Zagreb-Sarajevo: Hrvatski institut za povijest – Katoličko bogoslovni fakultet u Sarajevu, 2013), pp. 11–28; Emir Filipović, *Bosansko kraljevstvo i Osmansko carstvo od 1386. do 1463. godine*, PhD diss., University of Sarajevo, 2014, pp. 328–392.

[5] Antun Knežević, *Pad Bosne (1463)* (Senj: H. Luster 1886; Wenzeslaus Vlajić, *Untergang des bosnischen Königreiches.* Dissertation zur der Erlangung Doktorwürde an der Universtät zu Freiburg im Br., eingereicht (Sarajevo: sumptibus Provinciae Bosnae Argentinae 1926).

[6] Antun Knežević, *Krvava knjiga ili spomenik na 405 godina poslije propasti slavnoga kraljevstva bosanskoga* (Zagreb, 1869).

eration to the next. Furthermore, there are norecords of Bosnian Franciscan provenance concerning Bosnia falling under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. However, the situation is completely different when it comes to the Mongolian invasion in 1241 or the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, which were recorded and described in a dramatic and apocalyptic way in contemporary records of the Dominicans.[7] It is surely telling that, as far as is known from surviving Franciscan chronicles, the first time the fall of Bosnia in 1463 was covered was in the *Fojnica Chronicle*, by an anonymous seventeenth-century author, almost two centuries after the event. This was followed by Andrija Šipračić, Provincial of Bosnia (1681–1684), Bernardin Nagnanović, Nikola Lašvanin (†1750), Ivan Stražemanin-Kopijarević (eighteenth century), Lovro Androšević, Bono Benić (c. 1708–1785) and Filip Lastrić (1700–1783).[8] In this chronological sequence taking us through to the late eighteenth century, Lastrić's work forms the turning point between chronicles and historiographical discourse. There can be no doubt that the fall of Bosnia in 1463 would have been dealt with by earlier chroniclers than these in the Franciscan province of Bosnia Argentina, but the misfortunes of the monasteries of the province, which were all too often looted, burned down or otherwise ravaged deliberately or by accident, provide a ready explanation for the absence of such earlier material.

A quest for the common elements in the Franciscan accounts of the events of 1463 from the *Fojnica Chronicle* to Lastrić would begin with the mythical motif of the alleged murder of the last but one king of Bosnia, Stjepan Tomaš (1443–1461), orchestrated by his son Stjepan Tomašević and his brother Radivoj. This was followed, as Lašvanin puts it, by "these two accursed regicides dividing up the Bosnian kingdom between them." Another mythical feature introduced by Lašvanin is what he called the "betrayal" of Stjepan Tomašević, son-in-law of Lazar, Despot of Serbia, who surrendered Smederevo to the Turks in 1458.[9] Yet another betrayal, according to Lastrić, was perpetrated by King Stjepan Tomaš, who "not only failed to imprison the 'disguised' Sultan Mehmed (Fatih, the Conqueror) in Jajce, as he should have, but actually released him after paying him honours and bestowing gifts on him." This was why his murderer son Stjepan Tomašević "paid the price of destruction" and the "entire Kingdom was consigned to disaster and slavery, under which we

[7] Juliane Schiel, *Mongolensturm und Fall Konstantinoples. Dominikanische Erzählungen im diachronen Vergleich* (Berlin: Akademiae Verlag, 2011).

[8] S. Anto Kovačić, "Pad Bosne i Hercegovine pod Turke u spisima bosanskohercegovačkih franjevaca", *Nova et Vetera*, XXIX/1 (1979): pp. 123–126.

[9] Nikola Lašvanin, *Ljetopis*, edited and translated from the Latin and Italian, with introduction and notes, by Fr. Ignacije Gavran (Sarajevo, Zagreb: Synopsis, 2003²), p. 133.

are still groaning to this day."[10] For Benić, too, these events were the reason for *Bosnia's falling into slavery.*[11] Ivan Stražemanin-Kopijarević dealt even more explicitly with the nexus of betrayal and punishment in 1730, when he explained the tragic and rapid fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia as "God's punishment" for the decision of King Stjepan Tomašević, "a heedless man", to withhold tribute to the Sultan and to kill his own father.[12] As Rastko Drljić wrote in 1940, this view of the events of 1463 "is still present in the simple minds of our people, in their laconic sayings."[13]

From the *Fojnica Chronicle* to Lastrić, Bosnian Franciscan chronicles ascribe the reason for the fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia in 1463 to two mythico-epic causes and their effects: patricide, and betrayal. It remains a mystery, since they took the notion of the murder of King Stjepan Tomaš from the works of the Ragusan writer, ideologue and historian Mavro Orbini (*Il regno degli Slavi*, Pesaro 1601),[14] why they did not also include the legend of the betrayal by the "Manichee Radak" who, according to Orbini, pretended to be a Catholic, was bribed by the Ottomans, and surrendered the royal court of Bobovac to them.[15] Their silence becomes all the more puzzling when one is aware that Benić, Lašvanin and Lastrić all refer to Bosnian "Manichees" and "heresy" in the years leading up to the fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia. [16] Religious passions, which were already running high and were embedded in the foundations of the discriminatory political order, needed little to flare up. Thus Benić, describing the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans, said that it took place "on the eve of Pentecost and as a rebuke to the Greeks, who do not believe that the Holy Spirit originates from the Son as well as from the Father."[17] As might be expected, for Filip Lastrić Sultan Mehmed II El Fatih was an "infidel." [18]

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[10] Filip Lastrić, *Pregled starina Bosanske provincije.* Edited with introduction and commentary by Dr. Fr. Andrija Zirdum; translated from the Latin and Italian by Dr. Fr. Ignacije Gavran and Fr. Šimun Šimić (Sarajevo, Zagreb: Synopsis, 2003²), p. 160.

[11] Bono Benić, *Ljetopis sutješkoga samostana.* Edited and translated from the Latin and Italian, with introduction and notes, by Fr. Ignacije Gavran (Sarajevo, Zagreb: Synopsis, 2003²), p. 39.

[12] Rastko Drljić, "Propast Bosne u ljetopisu fra Stražemana (Kopijarevića)", *Napredak – Hrvatski narodni kalendar* (1940): pp. 86–90.

[13] Drljić, "Propast Bosne", p. 90.

[14] Mavro Orbin, *Kraljevstvo Slovena* (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1968), p. 166.

[15] Orbin, *Kraljevstvo Slovena*, p. 171.

[16] Benić, *Ljetopis sutješkoga samostana*, p. 38; Lašvanin, *Ljetopis*, 133; Lastrić, *Pregled starina*, p. 159.

[17] Benić, *Ljetopis sutješkoga samostana*, p. 38.

[18] Lastrić, *Pregled starina*, p. 160.

These scraps and legends are all that has come down to us in writing on the year 1463 from Franciscan chroniclers, for whom this was the year of "the Day of Judgment."

3. THE FIRST GENERATION OF FRANCISCAN HISTORIANS ON 1463: IVAN FRANJO JUKIĆ, ANTUN KNEŽEVIĆ AND MIJO BATINIĆ

Despite being strongly influenced by mythical and legendary discourse and folk traditions, *Ivan Franjo Jukić* (1818–1857), Franciscan, educator, poet, publicist, ethnographer, writer, historian, travel chronicler and linguist, was the first Bosnian Franciscan to use scholarly historiographical methods in his description of the fall of Bosnia in 1463, introducing the historical sources to which he had access in his discussion of the events. His outlook is essentially a mediaeval one: God directs history, and punishes peoples and individuals who do not observe His commandments. Jukić set out his views on the subject under the pen-name *Slavoljub Bošnjak*, in a pioneering work on the geography and history of Bosnia entitled *Zemljopis i poviestnica Bosne*, published in Zagreb in 1851.

Jukić's text blends myth and legend with scholarship. He begins by repeating the deeply entrenched legend of patricide, followed by the supposed appeal by Queen Katarina to Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror to come to Bosnia and "avenge her husband's death." What is new is that Sigismund, Katarina's son (captured by the Ottomans and taken to Istanbul, where he embraced Islam), also puts in an appearance, joining the Sultan's troops and inciting the people against King Stjepan Tomašević. Since these events do not appear in Orbini's writings, the fact that Jukić introduces them must be due above all to popular tradition.

As the first Bosnian Franciscan to write about 1463, Jukić introduces the betrayal by Radak the "Manichee," the "originator" of whom was Orbini, but takes the story further than Orbini: instead of rewarding Radak, he claims that the Ottoman Sultan had him beheaded. The memory of this is preserved by "*Radakovica*, a huge rock from which fresh water spurts [...] where the voyvoda and traitor was killed."[19] Jukić makes use of the same essentially mediaeval conventions when describing the execution of the last king of Bosnia, the unhappy Stjepan Tomašević, associating him directly with the patricide, and

[19] Franjo Ivan Jukić, *Zemljopis i poviestnica Bosne od Slavoljuba Bošnjaka* (Zagreb: Gaj, 1851. in: Ivan Franjo Jukić, Sabrana dijela, vol. 1, selected and edited by Boris Ćorić, (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1973) pp. 290–294, 298

referring to the promise made to him by the Ottoman commander when he fled to Ključ, where he surrendered: an assurance that his life would be spared. "Oh, my unhappy king, do you not know that the Turkish faith is like spume on the waters! But your sins caught up with you."[20]

Drawing on primary historical sources, Jukić gives a veridical account of the departure of the Bosnian emissaries to Pope Pius II and his diplomatically worded response concerning the despatch of the papal crown to Bosnia, which he associates with the alleged right of the ruler of Hungary to crown the kings of Bosnia. Jukić's reconstruction of the role of the papal legate in Bosnia, Bishop Nicholas of Modruš, is also an irreproachable piece of scholarship, with its account of his recklessly persuading the king to withhold payment of the *kharaj* (tribute) to the Sultan, promising him in return that he would have the Pope's support in the defence of his country. Jukić describes him succinctly as a man who was "more pious than reasonable."[21] The crucial part played by Nicholas of Modruš and his featuring in the section of Pope Pius II's Commentaries dealing with the fall of Bosnia in 1463 – which is where the "Manichaean betrayal" appears – was acknowledged and elaborated on by Srećko M. Džaja.[22]

Like Benić's, Jukić's view of the reasons for the fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia in his "historiographical text dealing with actual historical events, says much about its author."[23] In fact it says just as much about the *zeitgeist*, about Bosnian confessionalism and the inflexible millet system as the mind-set for understanding oneself and the other – and yet is different. In essence, Jukić paints a biblical picture of history: as the creator of life and mankind, God gave us laws to rule our lives, but human sins "spoiled" the divine plan, and from time to time, divine retribution strikes a given people. For mediaeval Bosniacs, the Turks were the embodiment of that retribution:

"The fate of nations is in the hands of the almighty creator, who uplifts one nation and consigns another to ruin, so that those who did not follow the path of virtue while they were free may learn while serving God during their captivity. Whenever people have strayed from their true calling, God has brought upon them now famine, now pestilence, as a warning, and if even then they failed to respond, he would send them bloodthirsty nations who would crush them without mercy; history old and new, ecclesiastical and secular, teaches us this [...]. The same iniquities that brought down the Greek empire were

[20] Jukić, *Zemljopis i poviestnica Bosne*, pp. 29–45.

[21] Jukić, *Zemljopis i poviestnica Bosne*, p. 298.

[22] Srećko M. Džaja, , "Bosansko srednjovjekovlje kroz prizmu bosanske krune, grba i biskupije", *Jukić*, 15 (1985): pp. 81–102.

[23] Fr. Iva Beljan, "Bono Benić u *Ljetopisu sutješkoga samostana*", in: *Stoljeća Kraljeve Sutjeske*, (Sarajevo, Kraljeva Sutjeska: Kulturno-povijesni institut Bosne Srebrene, 2010), p. 441.

the ruin of the Slav peoples, Bulgarians, Serbs and Bosniacs: arrogance, licentiousness and hatred prevailed among the people of the Middle Ages; everyone aspired to command, but lacked the skills to do so!" The Bosnian nobility betrayed the king: "They stood by and watched their king's downfall, hoping for greater wealth and good fortune from the Turks; so it is with an impious people, engulfed by evil and iniquity; they stand on the brink of hell, watching their own downfall but not seeing, blind!"

Finally, and no less significantly, Jukić is an extremely self-reflective author, aware, as he puts it, that "our own indifference has always been our worst enemy." He is also aware of all the shortcomings of his pioneering work, written with numerous breaks of months or even years at a time. He said of this: "If I were to convince my protégés that this account is complete and needs no correction, they would think me mad, and I would be feeble-minded [...]. If God grants me health, I am minded to revise and publish this work, and at that time, I shall attempt once again to approach Bosnia from a new angle; but I beseech all my native Bosnian friends to help me in this task, which I have described inaccurately and incompletely, and to correct me and fill in writing any gaps that I may have left." [24]

Antun Knežević, who studied under Jukić and remained a historian, is one of the most distinctive figures of nineteenth-century Bosnia Argentina.[25] He dealt with 1463 in his *Krvava knjiga*, the volume he published anonymously to "commemorate the 405th anniversary of the fall of the glorious Kingdom of Bosnia," written "at a dynamic period in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina", when the country was at the epicentre of European politics and the Eastern Question, and there was a glimmer of hope that it could be freed from Ottoman rule.[26] Knežević equated Ottoman rule with slavery, saying: "I am a sorrowful slave [...] A slave in property [...] A slave in life [...] A slave in all things: and I cannot aspire to even the lowliest public service, nor deserve the least justice in court." [27] This, he explained, is why *Krvava knjiga* remained "anonymous", for its publication was "a crime of high treason." Later, he would say: "It is not fifteen years since I dared to publish a book anonymously, and two Viziers, Topal-Osman-Pasha and Safet-Pasha, offered a boot full of ducats

[24] Jukić, *Zemljopis i poviestnica Bosne*, pp. 165–166.

[25] For more on Knežević see *Zbornik radova sa simpozija u povodu 100. obljetnice smrti fra Antuna Kneževića održanog u Jajcu 20. i 21. X. 1989*, (Sarajevo: "Kršćanska sadašnjost" Zagreb – Teološka biblioteka Sarajevo, 1991).

[26] Anto Kovačić, "Skica za studiju o fra Antunu Kneževiću", in *Zbornik radova sa simpozija u povodu 100. obljetnice smrti fra Antuna Kneževića*, pp. 27–29.

[27] Knežević, *Krvava knjiga*, pp. 34–37.

to anyone who would reveal the author's identity! And my good teacher Jukić had to pay with his life for writing about Bosnia!"[28]

As he described, in his romantic poetic style, Bosnia's "natural fertility", the significance of the "Beza" tribe after which Bosnia was named, "proud" mediaeval Bosnia and "the Bosniacs, famed as heroes", Knežević joined the "long list of chroniclers looking forward to" better times as the only humane aspect of our lives, "waiting for better times in history, which seldom come, at least during one man's lifetime."[29] At that time of hopelessness, his political and ethical ideal was the mediaeval Kingdom of Bosnia: "One God, one faith, one people, one language, one rule [...]. All these things that proud Bosnia possessed could be found nowhere else. So the Bosniacs enjoyed a paradise of delights and plenty."[30] This historical "idyll" was rudely shattered by the "wicked Bogomils" and their baneful teachings. Bosnia's leading land-owners, loyal to the Bogomil faith, caused the downfall of "glorious Bosnia", which fell to the Ottomans – the "flood from the East of [...] bloodthirsty, filthy Turks."[31] The Bosniacs "are not what they were. That venomous faith has poisoned their hearts. Each hates and ill-wishes the other, each digs a pit for the other."[32] Expatiating on this apocalyptic, confessional *leitmotif*, rooted in the Bible and engendered by a *parochial* political culture of *subjection*, Knežević adopts a epic style to describe how "[King] Stjepan was tricked by the crafty Bogomils, who pretended to be what they were not, claiming to be true believers. He handed over his castles and towns to them and, trusting in their loyalty, withheld payment of the *kharaj* to the Turks", only for that "black-souled Radak the Patarene to betray the undefeated town of Bobovac to the sultan [...]. The beloved homeland was lost. The beloved nation was lost."[33] The last king of Bosnia, Stjepan Tomašević, who met the cruellest of deaths on the sultan's orders when he was flayed alive, became the paradigmatic martyr of this disaster. "Alas, poor king," writes Knežević, "what fate befell you! But your sweet soul is blessed, for you endured torture for the sake of your dear people and your beloved homeland."[34] The Biblical image of the suffering Christ is transmuted into the image of the martyred king; while Christ died to save the whole of humankind, the martyred king saved his soul by being executed for his "dear people" and "beloved homeland."

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[28] Knežević, *Pad Bosne (1463)*, p. 5.

[29] Miroslav Karaulac, "Duh pred silom", in *Zbornik radova sa simpozija u povodu 100. obljetnice smrti fra Ȃntuna Kneževića*, p. 95.

[30] Knežević, *Krvava knjiga*, p. 19.

[31] Knežević, *Krvava knjiga*, pp. 19–20.

[32] Knežević, *Krvava knjiga*, p. 21.

[33] Knežević, *Krvava knjiga*, pp. 22–23.

[34] Knežević, *Krvava knjiga*, p. 24.

The radicalized Bogomil myth, as interpreted by Antun Knežević, saw the light of day in Zagreb in 1869 – the same year in which Franjo Rački's treatise *Bogomili i Patareni* (Bogomils and Patarenes: Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts) was published. This latter is usually regarded as the historiographical originator of the Bogomilization of mediaeval Bosnia, a piece of pseudo-scholarship that is still being (mis)used. It is difficult at this distance in time to determine the relationship between these two authors – was Knežević influenced by Rački?

Knežević's discourse is romantic and patriotic, and also a discourse of the cataclysmic political and cultural discontinuity between mediaeval and Ottoman Bosnia. His is an extremely thankless position – "the spirit versus force" – and he admits that he often carried a revolver under his monk's habit, though it is true that he never had to use it.[35] His romantic preoccupation and focus on a "glorious past" are understandable at a time of icy alienation which offered not the slightest hope for the future. His attitude towards the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina is "a kind of spiritual state, an emotional mobilization of consciousness", a quest "for the sources of Bosnia's statehood [...] without being engulfed in the nation-building space of others, even of our brother Croats and Serbs, which is how he genuinely regarded them."[36] He initially developed this idea in his poem "in a naïve rhetorical style", *Suze Bošnjaka nad grobnicom kralja svoga u Jajcu: poslije 401 godine robstva njegova*, published, as already noted, in Zagreb in 1865. In this short piece, which rose to dramatic heights, and using archaic literary forms, Knežević gave expression to the pent-up trans-generational syndrome that "Turkish slavery" had left in the collective psychology of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Catholics:

Življeti je meni dodijalo;
življenje mi moje omrznulo...
Ja sam sužanj, ah, bože veliki!
sramni sužanj gada najgorega.
Sužnja me je porodila majka
a ja, sužanj, sužnja izrodio,
u sužanjstvu da kletom robuju,
u nevolji do smrti jaduju,
kano što su preko četir' vieka
pradjedovi moji robovali![37]

Weary of life am I;
Hateful is life to me ...
A prisoner am I, ah, great God
A shameful slave, most despicable.
My mother bore me a slave
And I, a slave, bore a slave,
Accursed am I in captivity,
Lamenting unto death in my misery,
As for four centuries past
Were my forebears enslaved.

[35] Karaulac, "Duh pred silom", p. 93.

[36] Vojislav Vujanović, "Bošnjaštvo – etički zagovor odgovornosti fra Antuna Kneževića", in *Zbornik radova sa simpozija u povodu 100. obljetnice smrti fra Antuna Kneževića*, pp. 131, 133.

[37] Knežević, *Krvava knjiga*, pp. 60–61.

These verses are the expression of the trans-generational psycho trauma accompanied by "numerous emotions which were in a deep silence passed from generation to generation leaving profound traces in personalities, groups and extremely large groups".[38] It was, performed in literature, one of the numerous manifestations of the "Turkish terror" – a syntagm which was introduced by the end of October in 1386 by the people of Dubrovnik on the occasion of the first recorded invasion of the Ottoman troops in the area of the Bosnian Kingdom.[39] Beginning with the "Turkish terror" to "the sick man of the Bosphorus" in the second half of the nineteenth century, along with the term "Turkish yoke" introduced to historiography by Konstantin Jireček in 1876, the Turkish people presented in European and Balkanic historiography, especially in oral culture, "the other", the demonic being that caused formation of various construction plots and legends intensified by the animosity and hostility between Christianity and Islam.[40] It is not (was not) easy to rise beyond the boundaries of that socio-psychological stereotype formed under a spell and over many centuries. It is still evident today at the peak of the period of globalization, when the question of (not) accepting Turkey into the EU underlines how history has not yet been reconsidered or revised, how it still very actively resembles a dormant volcano which may erupt unpredictably.

Knežević's human and intellectual greatness – born as he was in an alien environment of vandalism and savagery – is to be seen in the solution he proposes for breaking out of the vicious circle of abuse and retaliation: the concept of national Bosniachood as an integrative identity for all of Bosnia and Herzegovina's peoples, faiths and confessions. Thus he says: "Share good faith and peoplehood; safeguard your faith, and defend your peoplehood! [...]. But why must I upset everything because of religion, and reject another; is he not my brother? So say to everyone: Ah, dear Bosniacs! [...] Let us all be accountable to God for our faith, but let us agree as brothers in our peoplehood! Let there be no war over religion, one mother bore us, we are brothers, and we all have the one God! Whoever does not love his brother does not love the one God; he is a traitor."[41] He sees the solution not in violence and revenge, but instead emphasizes the importance of culture and education in cutting the Bosnian "Gordian

[38] Eduard Klain, "Šutnja kao fenomen (od velike grupe do male psihoterapijske grupe)", in: *Prvi psihoterapijski simpozij Bosne i Hercegovine* "Šutnja u psihoterapiji i zajednici", Tuzla 25.–26. septembra/rujna 2009 (Sarajevo: Klinika za psihijatriju UKC Tuzla – Udruženje za grupnu analizu BiH – Udruženje psihijatara Tuzlanskog kantona, 2009), p. 6.

[39] Filipović, *Bosansko kraljevstvo i Osmansko carstvo od 1386. do 1463. godine*, p. 57.

[40] Filipović, *Bosansko kraljevstvo i Osmansko carstvo od 1386. do 1463. godine*, pp. 6–9.

[41] Knežević, *Krvava knjiga*, pp. 40–41.

knot." "Whether a Turk by faith or a Catholic or a Vlach [Orthodox], we are all made to be civilized, to embrace civility and thereby to educate ourselves."[42]

In line with our current preoccupation with human rights and the secular state as central concepts, Knežević's "Abrahamic" Bosniachood was to remain an "ethical plea for responsibility" towards the past and the future.[43]

Knežević fulfilled his mature scholarly potential in a short work entitled *Pad Bosne (1463)* (The fall of Bosnia, 1463), published in Senj in 1886 – the first historical work of Franciscan origin dealing specifically with the last days of the Kingdom of Bosnia. He had already written on the subject two years earlier, in his *Kratka povijest kralja bosanskih. Po izvorima napisao za mladež bosansku* (Short history of the kings of Bosnia: written from sources for the youth of Bosnia), in which the romantic epic genre was replaced by the scholarly method of reconstructing the past from primary sources, of both local and foreign provenance.[44] Continuing his affirmation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's political and national independence rooted in its mediaeval statehood ("glorious history"), Knežević repudiates any kind of arrogation of this country, wherever it might originate, including by Serbs and Croats.[45] His critical assessment of Hungarian historiography on mediaeval Bosnia, along the same lines, was not without a scholarly basis.[46]

He describes in minute detail the concatenation of international circumstances that led to the downfall of the Kingdom of Bosnia in 1463: the country's internal political relations, the strategic and political importance of its capital, Jajce, the attitude of its neighbours (Serbia, Dubrovnik and Hungary) during those critical events, the way the Ottomans conducted their military operations, the military preparations and diplomatic moves of the last king of Bosnia, the Bosnians' military resistance, the fall of Bosnia in May and June 1463, and finally the efforts of the Bosnian nobility in August 1463 to interest Venice in the restoration of the Kingdom of Bosnia. All this is accompanied by the diplomatic correspondence of the principal foreign political actors who had an impact on Bosnia's fate: Dubrovnik, Venice, the Roman Curia and Hungary.[47]

His scholarly maturity and extensive use of narrative and diplomatic sources is reflected in his qualifying of the idea that the Bogomils brought about the rapid downfall of Bosnia in 1463. "Luckily, Bosnia was not full of the king's

[42] Knežević, *Krvava knjiga*, p. 59.

[43] Vujanović, "Bošnjaštvo", pp. 127–133.

[44] See Dubravko Lovrenović, "Fra Antun Knežević – povjesničar srednjovjekovne Bosne", in *Zbornik radova sa simpozija u povodu 100. obljetnice smrti fra Antuna Kneževića*, pp. 135–140.

[45] Knežević, *Pad Bosne (1463)*, pp. 6–8.

[46] Knežević, *Pad Bosne*, p. 6; Lovrenović, "Fra Antun Knežević", p. 138.

[47] Knežević, *Pad Bosne*, pp. 19–59.

enemies, full of Patarenes, full of traitors, full of Turkish supporters who surrendered Bosnia to the Turk and who had already occupied it before the Turk arrived, as later enemies of Bosnia have imagined, to hide their shame. As in every country, so in Bosnia one could find a Radak the traitor, but it is wrong to attribute everything to the actions of one person!"[48] The historiography proposed by Knežević over a century ago remains academically valid in its main outlines,[49] notwithstanding its many epic-style passages of purple prose based on popular tradition. And finally the last but not the least important: cultural memory formed by Knežević as a historian seems to be "some kind of resistance", "some kind of weapon against tyranny", which has the aim of "liberation by means of memory", and has the function of *founding history* together with its standard requests and formative strength.[50]

Just after the introduction of Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia in 1878, Mijo Batinić became the first Bosnian Franciscan to write a complete history of the Franciscan order in the country.[51] That fateful year of 1463 found a place in his comprehensive treatise. Seen through a confessional lens and narrated according to the "before and after" principle, it reads as follows: "When Bosnia fell to the Ottomans, irreparable damage was also caused to the Catholic cause in this province. At that first moment of sudden, violent conquest, the Turks sought to convert the entire country, convinced that only a single religious mind-set could consolidate their possession of this transitional point between East and West [...] while some of the Franciscans, at the time the only Catholic priests in Bosnia, became leaders of the Catholics in exile, and others retreated into the country's remote forests where, disguised in everyday garb, they ministered to the terrified remnant of their fellow believers in the holy faith, raising their spirits during those testing times. Many were killed [...]. While the godless Turks were eradicating all evidence of Christianity, the Franciscans strove to save their secular and church valuables by hiding them from the ravaging hordes."[52] In Batinić's eyes, the main cause of the fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia was its religious disunity, and especially the presence of "Bogomil disciples" or "Patarenes." Hoping to end this disunity,

[48] Knežević, *Pad Bosne*, pp. 32–33, 39–40.

[49] Cf. Marko Šunjić, "Trogirski izvještaji o turskom osvojenju Bosne (1463)", *Glasnik Arhivskog društva i arhivskih radnika Bosne i Hercegovine*, 29 (1989): pp. 139–157; Marko Šunjić, *Bosna i Venecija (odnosi u XIV i XV stoljeću)* (Sarajevo: HKD Napredak, 1996).

[50] Jan Asman, *Kultura pamćenja. Pismo, sećanje i politički identitet u ranim visokim kulturama.* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 2011), pp. 76–77, 84–87. The original title: Jan Assmann, Das Kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in Frühen Hochkulturen (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2007).

[51] Vjenceslav Mijo Batinić, *Djelovanje franjevaca u Bosni i Hercegovini za prvih šest viekova njihova* boravka (Zagreb: Dionička tiskara 1881).

[52] Batinić, *Djelovanje franjevaca*, p. 127.

King Stjepan Tomaš had had the courage to "take the great but fateful step of bringing heretics into the Catholic Church or banishing them from the country on which they had inflicted such misfortune."[53] It is against this background that Batinić viewed the efforts by the last two kings of Bosnia – Tomaš and Stjepan Tomašević – to secure military aid from Catholic countries by embracing the Catholic faith and forming an alliance with the Papacy.[54]

In common with other Franciscan writers, Batinić takes up the subject of "Bogomil treachery", writing that "the landlords who had in recent years adopted the Catholic faith betrayed their flag and embraced Muhammedanism [...] and thereby the Bogomil sect, by digging the grave of Bosnian freedom, unanimously adopted the mind-set of the prophet of Medina."[55] Not even the "extraordinary help from the heavens", by which he meant Pope Pius II's confirmation of St Gregory the Miracle-Worker as the patron saint of the Kingdom of Bosnia, "was able to ensure a happier ending."[56]

4. THE SECOND GENERATION OF FRANCISCAN HISTORIANS ON 1463: JULIJAN JELENIĆ, VJENCESLAV VLAJIĆ AND DOMINIK MANDIĆ

The departure of Batinić, and in particular of Knežević, from the historiographical scene in Bosnia Argentina made way for another generation of Franciscan historians whose interests included 1463 and also extended to the twentieth century. The question that arises is whether this new generation introduced a new approach and a new emphasis – a new historical narrative – to the study of history.

Julijan Jelenić deals only in passing with 1463 in his two-volume work on the culture of the Bosnian Franciscans, repeating the established tradition of describing in superlatives King Stjepan Tomaš – at first a Patarene and later an "ardent Catholic" – and his son Stjepan Tomašević, crowned with the papal crown in Jajce in November 1461. He also continues the tradition of seeing Bosnia's downfall as caused by the indifference of neighbouring rulers, internal dissensions, and the intrigues "of Patarenes who had moved into Hum and the Ottoman areas."[57]

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[53] Batinić, *Djelovanje franjevaca*, pp. 105, 108, 118.

[54] Batinić, *Djelovanje franjevaca*, pp. 114–115, 122.

[55] Batinić, *Djelovanje franjevaca*, p. 124.

[56] Batinić, *Djelovanje franjevaca*, p. 123.

[57] Julijan Jelenić, *Kultura i bosanski franjevci*, I, (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1990), pp. 92–93. Phototype of the 1912 edition, edited and with an introduction by Marko Karamatić.

Vjenceslav Vlajić's short work published forty years after Knežević's study of the fall of Bosnia in 1463 is the second account of these events from Bosnian Franciscan circles. From the outset his scholarly purpose, expressed in a narrative, positivist manner, was to legitimize the notion that Turkish incursions into the Balkans – not only Bosnia but also Croatia and Slavonia – had lasting consequences. For their centuries-long struggle against the Turks to ensure their own survival and to preserve Christianity, the Croats were recognized by the Pope as *antemurale christianitatis*.[58] As for the main reasons for Bosnia's downfall in 1463, Vlajić emphasizes her internal fragility, exacerbated by religious schism, Turkish propaganda among the peasantry, King Stjepan Tomašević's international isolation, and the hostile attitude of Hungary's King Matthias towards Bosnia.[59]

By comparison with every previous Franciscan author, however, Vlajić took a great leap forward by introducing confessional identity into his discourse, especially that of King Tomaš and his son King Stjepan Tomašević, associating them with the sending of the papal crown to Bosnia. Vlajić concludes that after King Tomaš's conversion from "Patarenism" to Catholicism, his son Stjepan Tomašević, anxious to receive the papal crown, tried to gain the support of Rome, and thereby of the countries of Christendom, in the impending confrontation with the Ottomans.[60] Following this line of thought, recent research into Hungarian-Bosnian relations has both corroborated it and provided new insights.[61] Based on narrative and diplomatic sources, Vlajić's historiographical pedantry nonetheless left his own critical apparatus permeable to the ancient myth of "Radak the Patarene" and his surrender of Bobovac to the Sultan.[62]

The last among the Franciscan historians to deal with the events of 1463 was Dominik Mandić. He believed that the main reasons for the fall of the Bosnian Kingdom under the Ottoman rule were the converting of "Bosnian Christians called krstjani to the Catholic religion" (he named them "native Croat Bosniacs"), their collaboration with the Turks, the inner disunion and disagreement of the rulers and "frequent Turkish plunderings and ravagings." Quite in contrast to his predecessors, he introduced to the description of this event a new ethno-national discourse, trying to present the medieval Bosnia as a part of the Croatian ethnical and political area.[63]

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[58] Vlajić, *Untergang des bosnischen Königreiches*, p. 6.

[59] Vlajić, *Untergang des bosnischen Königreiches*, pp. 43–45.

[60] Vlajić, *Untergang des bosnischen Königreiches*, pp. 38, 46–47 et.seq.

[61] Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti*, pp. 566–571.

[62] Vlajić, *Untergang des bosnischen Königreiches*, p. 53.

[63] Dominik Mandić, *Etnička povijest Bosne i Hercegovine* (Toronto-Zurich-Rome-Chicago: ZIRAL, 1982²), pp. 174–192.

However, that does not mean that the Franciscan Province called "Bosnia Argentina" – "Bosna Srebrena" – remained confined in ancient mytholegems and ethno-national stereotypes. On the contrary, on 16th and 17th October 1998 the Franciscan Theology of Sarajevo organised an academic conference dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the death of the friar Anđeo Zvizdović (1420–1498). The collection published two years later included the pieces of work dedicated to the very year of 1463. These pieces were written in the sense of the modern science of History with a critical distance towards the Franciscan chroniclers and historiographers.[64]

A completely other issue that can be brought up is the question whether those scientific results were presented in the public speech of the Catholic Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The following examples, which are by no means the only ones, do not speak in contribution to it.

"Eternal present" – "Eternal past."

Thus, the trans-mediated, distorted and static image of a historical event is present in the Church today, and that brings us back to the question of the relationship between "orthodoxy" in Catholicism, the term "charged ideology" and political culture. Here we have an example of "orthodoxy" entrusted to "the Church structures whose purpose was to preserve it in turbulent times".[65] On the other hand, there is the matter of an understanding of orthodoxy in the postmodern context, marked with "detraditionalization, individualization and pluralization". The Christian self-understanding of identity is interrupted and it is faced with *structural uncertainty*. Questions of identity and belonging require a choice.[66] This brings us back to Knežević and to his time.

So far ahead of his times as to be a contemporary of ours, Knežević advocated a solution to the humiliating state of subjection and abuse based on trans-confessional Bosniachood as an integrative identity for all the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[67] To put it in Agnes Heller's terms, Knežević brings

[64] Srećko M. Džaja, "Osmansko osvojenje Bosne i Rimska kurija"; Ivo Goldstein, "Bizantski izvori o osmanskom osvajanju Bosne 1463. godine"; Jozo Džambo , "Geschicht von der Turckey" Jörga iz Nürnberga 1463. godine; Stjepan Lovrić, "Bosanska srednjovjekovna državnost u tradiciji Bosne Srebrene", in: *Zbornik radova sa znanstvenog skupa u povodu 500. obljetnice smrti fra Anđela Zvizdovića* (Sarajevo-Fojnica: Franjevačka teologija Sarajevo – Franjevački Samostan Fojnica, 2000), pp. 219–283.

[65] Andrés Queiruga, Torres, "Pravovjerje danas: od 'anatema sit' do 'tko sam ja da sudim?'", *Concilium*, I/2, (Travanj 2014): p. 18.

[66] Lieven Boeve, "Pravovjerje u post-modernističkom kontekstu. Prekidanje kršćanskih zahtjeva za istinom"", *Concilium*, I/2, (Travanj 2014): pp. 99–101.

[67] Dubravko Lovrenović, "Bosanski Jeremija u novom izdanju", in the foreword to the 2nd edition of *Kratka povjest kralja bosanskih* (Sarajevo: Dobra knjiga, 2009), pp. 8–13.

to life the idea of history as containing past, present and future – a historical past filled with hope as well as a historical future as the image of a new, human social and cultural structure.[68] As the first and only person to do so, not merely in Franciscan circles and not only in his own day, Knežević opens up the "prospects for an Abrahamic œcumene," a "dialogue from faith: competing in goodness", "belief in God without intolerance", "freedom from religious coercion" and, finally, "against old and new idolatry", as Karl-Josef Kuschel puts it in our own times.[69] Knežević's greatness, in his Abrahamically-inspired interpretation of Bosnia's history, was matched by Fr. Josip Markušić (1880–1968), the most outstanding twentieth-century figure in Bosnia Argentina, when he said of people in Bosnia: "They are all our people, regardless of their different faiths".[70]

With the exception of Markušić, the Abrahamic basis for the interpretation of Bosnia's history proposed by Knežević as a solution to the traumatic year of 1463 vanished from the Franciscan historiographical scene, along with the centuries-old motif of the restoration of the Kingdom of Bosnia.[71] With the Croatization of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Catholics in the early twentieth century, the preoccupation with Croatian national integration became topical, with the Croatization of medieval Bosnia as one of its driving forces.[72]

So we are back where we began, in the year 1463. In June 1993, midway through the 1992–1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a specifically Bosnian historical paradox occurred in Travnik (Central Bosnia) when the King Stjepan Tomašević unit of the Croatian Defence Council came face to face with the Sultan Fatih troops of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[73] Time stood still as new generations relived the lives of their forebears.

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[68] Agnes Heller, *Teorija istorije* (Belgrade: Rad, 1984), pp. 79–80, 124. Original title: *A Theory of History*. Translated by Zora Minderović.

[69] Josef-Karl Kuschel, *Spor oko Abrahama.* Što židove, *kršćane i muslimane dijeli – a* što *ih ujedinjuje* (Sarajevo: Svjetlo riječi, 2001²), pp. 212 ss.. Original title: Karl-Josef Kuschel, *Streit um Abraham. Was die Juden, Christen und Muslime trennt – und was sie eint* (R. Piper GmbH, Munich-Zurich, 1994).

[70] Ivan Lovrenović, *Bosanski Hrvati. Esej o agoniji jedne evropsko-orijentalne kulture* (Zagreb-Sarajevo: Synopsis, 2010²), p. 231.

[71] See Lovrić, "Bosanska srednjovjekovna državnost u tradiciji Bosne Srebrene", pp. 275–283.

[72] Dubravko Lovrenović, „Kroatizacija bosanskog srednjovjekovlja u svjetlu interkonfesionalnosti stećaka (O jednom modelu promjene historijskog pamćenja)", *Godišnjak Centra za balkanološka ispitivanja*, 42, Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, (2013): pp. 103–128.

[73] Željko Ivanković, "Rat i njegova medijska slika u Bosni i Hercegovini (mitološko-nacionalni i historijsko-politički stereotipi)", in *Na marginama kaosa* (Sarajevo: Rabic, 2001), p. 93, n. 20. The Croatian Defence Council was the official military formation of the so-called Croatian Republic of Herceg-Bosna; Mehmed the Conqueror, the sultan who conquered Bosnia in 1463, is often known simply as Sultan Fatih (the Conqueror) in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There is ample evidence to demonstrate that this is indeed how it was experienced, for example the *Statement by the Board of the Franciscan Province of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Occasion of the 550th Anniversary of the Ahdnama*, issued on 28 May 2013, which includes the following passage:

"We Bosnian Franciscans cannot celebrate this anniversary; for us it is no occasion for celebration. The once glorious Kingdom of Bosnia was destroyed 550 years ago, the last king of Bosnia, Stjepan Tomašević, was perfidiously slain on 5 June 1463, and though Bosnia's Queen Katarina Kotromanić-Kosača did manage to flee Bosnia she was never able to return to her kingdom. For us, therefore, this anniversary is a national and state tragedy."[74]

In a sermon delivered during the mass for the "Twelfth Day of Prayer for the Homeland" at Bobovac, Bosnia's mediaeval capital, on 26 October 2013, Cardinal Vinko Puljić said that Bobovac fell to the Ottomans "thanks to the traitor Radak", and expressed his "sorrow that even today there are traitors who will sell out or mortgage the people for their own self-interest."[75]

The generations fall at the same hurdle – 1463. "Past misfortunes are today's routine."[76]

Instead of an "eternal present" we have an "eternal past." The view of the Southern Slavs as "slow, exceedingly slow-paced peoples"[77] is confirmed.

All this should also be seen in the light of the multidimensional image of the Ottoman Empire proposed by Dimitri Kitsikis:

"The history of Turkey, Greece, Armenia and the Middle East, as well as Arab, Jewish, Balkan, Muslim and Christian history, can only partly illuminate the history of this empire. Sadly, all too often its history is equated with the history of Turkey [...]. The distortion of the truth was exacerbated with the emergence of national movements in the nineteenth and twentieth century, each aspiring to incorporate the history of multinational empires into their own national history [...]. This shows us how absurd is the grandiose mythology that engulfed Balkan historiography in the nineteenth century and Arabic historiography in the twentieth to justify the exclusive nationalism of each people, which utterly distorted the history of the Empire. Every historian, from Belgrade to Baghdad, had to become a national propagandist or risk being accused of betraying his homeland."[78]

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[74] *Svjetlo riječi*, no/ 364–5, (July/Aug 2013): p. 6.

[75] Dražen Kustura, , "Križ je simbol našeg vjerničkog identiteta", *Katolički tjednik* – 44, 3. (November 2013): p. 4.

[76] Vladimir Dvorniković, *Karakterologija Jugoslovena* (Belgrade – Niš: Prosveta, 1990²), p. 665.

[77] Dvorniković, *Karakterologija Jugoslovena*, pp. 654, 658.

[78] Dimitri Kicikis, *Osmanlijsko Carstvo* (Belgrade: ΠΛΑΤΩ, 1999), pp. 5–7. Original: Dimitri Kitsikis, *L'Empire ottoman* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985).

CONCLUSION

The evolution of Franciscan chronicles and historiography relating to 1463 displays more common features than individual characteristics.

The leitmotif of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Bosnian Franciscan chroniclers consists of two epic myths in a nexus of cause and effect: patricide, and the several betrayals of two of Bosnia's kings: Stjepan Tomaš and Stjepan Tomašević. Strongly influenced by a biblical interpretation of history, the various chroniclers see the sequence of events as a just divine punishment for human sins.

Remaining true to the conventions of mediaeval genres and further developing the mythico-legendary formula, Jukić, one of the first Franciscan writers, introduced the motif of the betrayal by "Radak the Manichee", seeing historical events as the result of divine intervention, in which the Turks were God's way of punishing the Bosniacs, and taking the first conscious step towards secular historiography. Later generations of Franciscan historians, as well as contemporary historiography, are in his debt as a result. For a number of related reasons, the leading light of Franciscan historiography on the fall of Bosnia in 1463 is Antun Knežević. At first strongly influenced by the clichés of the myths and legends centred on Bogomil betrayal, in his later scholarly discourse Knežević developed his ethical and historical ideal of the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina embodied in the mediaeval Kingdom of Bosnia, which he longed to see restored. With Markušić, he is the only Bosnian Franciscan who from historical trauma caused by the year 1463 comes up with a vision that reconciles confessional affiliation and common national identity, i.e. democratic political culture, or in legal vocabulary: the equality before the law for all.

Each in his own way, and to different extents, the two twentieth-century Franciscan historians – Jelenić and Vlajić – offer variations on the ancient mythical motif of betrayal, abandoning scholarly methods in their pursuit of the ideas adumbrated by earlier generations of Franciscan writers.

The third among them, Dominik Mandić, introduced – until then unfamiliar – Croatian ethno-national mytholegem in the historiographic discourse in the Franciscan historiographic scope dedicated to the year 1463.

As regards the subject of this paper – within historical parameters – Knežević is a contemporary of Kuschel's and of ourselves, whereas the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina fits into the mediaeval confessional narrative.

The "centuries of prejudices," as Kitsikis calls them, have left deep and ineradicable scars on the individual and collective psychology of Bosnia and Herzegovina's confessional nations.

The mythical Turks have a guaranteed place in that image.

Venice Confronting the Ottoman Empire: A Struggle for Survival (Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries)

Ovidiu Cristea

1. INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper may be somewhat misleading, as it suggests a continuous state of warfare between Venice and the Ottoman Empire. It is well known that both powers tried to find a way to peaceful co-existence and that there usually was a constant flow of goods, news and people between Venice and Istanbul. Nevertheless I shall focus only on the military aspects and approach a vast topic – Venice and the Turks[1] – from a narrow perspective, i.e. the conflicts between the two powers. And in so doing I shall introduce a further limitation, focusing on the strategies used by the Republic of St. Mark aimed at checking the Ottoman military power, securing its Levantine possessions and protecting the maritime trade routes.

I am also aware that there are further restrictions to the scope of these piece. From a much longer period of co-existence I have selected only the fourteenth–sixteenth centuries as the core of my analysis. The fourteenth century represents both the beginning of the story and an age when the Venetians' main enemy were the Genoese and the Kingdom of Hungary. Nevertheless, the Ottomans emerged towards the end of the century as a serious threat during the reign of Bayezid I. The fifteenth century seems to be a period of undisputed Venetian hegemony; however the loss of Negroponte in 1470 and the defeat in the war of 1499–1503 are obvious signs of weakness. Somehow during this century the Ottomans were able to match the Venetian maritime power and even to surpass it, a trend which developed in the sixteenth century, when the Ottomans not only succeeded in gathering large numbers of vessels but were also in control of a great part of the shores of Balkan Peninsula, Anatolia and the Eastern Mediterranean. Also, the Sultan's fleet seemed to unmatched in any naval confrontation – until the battle of Lepanto. Hence

[1] Paolo Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, (Rome: Viella, 2013) especially pp. 19–43.

I have limited my investigation to the end of the sixteenth century. After this epoch there were still some major clashes but Venice was never able to reverse the balance of maritime power, despite a number of successes in the War of Candia. Another argument in this respect is that after 1569 the *mudae* towards the Levant came to an end. As Claire Judde de la Rivière argues, the Republic was forced to give up its public convoys on the eve of the War of Cyprus as a result of the lack of profitability and the growing insecurity of the maritime trade routes.[2] The decision can also be viewed as a symbolic one; it was a sort of self-recognition that the Republic could no longer impose its will on the sea.

There is also the problem of documentation. As Suraiya Faroqhi points out, Western documents "became accessible to researchers long before their counterparts in the Ottoman archives" and, consequently, "it is not surprising that they have left profound traces in the relevant historiography".[3] In other words, what we know about the military clashes between the two powers is shaped, especially for the earlier periods, by the Venetian documents, by the Venetian perception of the Turks.[4] Thus the Ottoman Empire is somewhat overshadowed as its objectives, actions and strategy are, in many cases, represented by the documents pertaining to the other camp; even if we assume that the Republic's perception of its enemy was accurate (which was not always the case), the risks of distortions persists. Such distortions were sometimes due to misinterpretations or over-interpretations of the epoch. In 1497, for instance, Venice seemed to believe that the Porte was confronted by a "crusade" led by the King of Poland while, in fact, the real target of the Polish expedition was Moldavia;[5] some years later, in 1514, *Serenissima* pay credit to the news of a very precarious position held by the Ottoman army in the war against the Safavids, a perception contradicted by the Battle of Çaldıran and its aftermath.[6] In both cases, the Venetians were the victims of rumors and false evidence originating from the Sultan's camp.

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[2] Claire Judde de la Rivière, *Naviguer, commercer, gouverner. Economie maritime et pouvoirs à Venise (XVe–XVIe siècles)*, (Leiden, Boston : Brill, 2008).

[3] Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World aroud it,* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004), pp. 42–43.

[4] On this aspect see Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont, *Les Ottomans, les Safavides et leurs voisins. Contribution à l'histoire des relations internationales dans l'Orient islamique de 1514 à 1524* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1987), p. 11.

[5] On this episode see Ovidiu Cristea, "A Strange Tale: King John Albert's Moldavian campaign (1497) in Marino Sanudo's Diarii", *Medieval and Early Modern Studies for Central and Eastern Europe*, 5 (2013): 117–134.

[6] For analysis of the Venetian sources on the Battle of Çaldıran, see Ovidiu Cristea, *Puterea cuvintelor. Stiri si razboi insec. XV–XVI*, (Târgoviste: Cetatea de Scaun, 2014), pp. 247–294.

One should also bear in mind that the Ottoman–Venetian confrontation was only one aspect of a broader Mediterranean picture. Frederic C. Lane has already underlined that the growth of both the Spanish and the Ottoman empires "explains Venice's decline in naval power more than does any backsliding on her part"[7] and Daniel Goffman shares the same view when he compares *Serenissima* with a sort of frontier principality caught between "two colossi".[8] There were other dangers with which Venice was faced, such as piracy, a ubiquitous phenomenon in the Mediterranean of the sixteenth century,[9] or the Portuguese rivalry in the spice trade.[10] All these developments as well as others – such as the creation of a Venetian dominion in Northern Italy (the *Terraferma*) – strongly influenced the Republic's decisions towards its Levantine Empire. This *Stato da Mar* was the backbone of Venetian power and prosperity from 1204 onwards. Its preservation ensured a strong foothold for the Republic in the Eastern Mediterranean and a network of ports of call for the trade and war ships. But from the beginning of the sixteenth century the "backbone" became something of an Achilles' heel. Even if, as Benjamin Arbel underlines, we should avoid the image of a *Stato da Mar* in permanent contraction,[11] these maritime possessions were in a continuous state of alert and their preservation demanded increasingly large financial and military resources.

There are also a number of historiographical myths, some of them born centuries ago. Their force and persistence overshadow the correct understanding of the Ottoman–Venetian relations. For instance, it is easy to quote expressions such as *Venezia amancebada del Turco*[12] or the almost ubiquitous

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[7] Frederic C. Lane, "Naval Actions and Fleet Organization, 1499–1502", in *Renaissance Venice*, edited by J.R. Hale (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), pp. 146–173 (p. 167).

[8] Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 139.

[9] Alberto Tenenti, "I corsari in Mediterraneo all'inizio del Cinquecento", *Rivista storica italiana* 72 (1960), no. 2, pp. 234–287; Alberto Tenenti, *Venezia e i corsari 1580–1615*, (Bari, Laterza, 1961). For the previous period see Irene B. Katele, "Piracy and the Venetian State: the Dilemma of the Maritime Defense in the Fourteenth Century" in *Speculum*, 63, 1988, no.4, pp. 865–889.

[10] Vitorino Magalhaes-Godinho, "Le repli vénitien et égyptien et la route du cap" in *Eventail d'histoire vivante: hommage à Lucien Fevre* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1953), pp. 283–300; Ruggiero Romano, Alberto Tenenti, Ugo Tucci, "Venise et la route du Cap : 1499–1517", in *Méditerranée et Océan indien* (Paris: École pratique des hautes études, 1970), pp. 109–132; Robert Finlay, "Crisis and Crusade in the Mediterranean : Venice, Portugal and the Cape Route to India 1498–1509", *Studi Veneziani*, 28 (1994) : pp. 45–91.

[11] Benjamin Arbel, "Venice's maritime empire in the early modern period", in *A companion to Venetian history*, edited by Eric R. Dursteler, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 125–253 (p. 142).

[12] Paolo Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, p. 21.

Siamo Veneziani poi christiani – a sentence highly praised by some historians – but impossible to find in any Venetian document.[13] Such sentences oversimplify a much more complex reality which required from Venice a subtle and flexible approach in its relations with the Sublime Porte.

Another sort of historiographical *cliché* concerns the military premises of the confrontation between the *Serenissima* and the Ottoman Empire. As Palmyra Brumett points out, the clash between the aforementioned powers was a sort of duel between a "whale" and an "elephant", although from a certain moment onwards Venice ceased to act like a whale while the Ottoman Empire resembled an elephant quite adapted to the sea.[14] This metaphor deserves some consideration if we take into account that during the Middle Ages Venice's hegemonic position was challenged several times by land powers (Byzantium, Hungary), by maritime powers (Genoa, the Turkish emirates of Menteşe and Aydın, the Catalan duchy of Athens) or by a collusion between a continental and naval power (as in the case of the so-called "War of Chioggia").

Despite some serious setbacks during these confrontations, the Serene Republic eventually prevailed due to its economic power, social stability, institutional strength, diplomatic flexibility and naval prowess. Nevertheless one can ask why all these "key factors" seemed to disappear before the emergent Ottoman Empire. Suddenly, at the end of the fifteenth century the Turkish naval power appeared to be *a fait accompli*. The sea, long perceived as a sort of impenetrable barrier of the Venetian defense system, increasingly appeared to be an uncertain frontier. It is not an easy task to explain how such dramatic change occurred. Some contemporary sources blamed the incompetence of Venetian leaders such as Nicolò da Canal (in the case of the fall of Negroponte) or Antonio Grimani (for the Venetian defeat at Zonchio); others deplored the corruption of the Venetian officials or the decline of the ancient military virtues. Such statements should not be taken at face value. One can assume that the emotional impact of the military disasters played its part in the contemporary judgments. Moreover, such statements seem to emphasize only the Venetian shortcomings, completely ignoring the role played by the Turks in the political and military developments.

Finally, the Ottoman–Venetian wars seem to be a symptom rather than a cause of the drastic change in the balance of forces in the Mediterranean during the fifteenth–sixteenth centuries.

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[13] For an overview see Ovidiu Cristea, "Siamo veneziani, poi christiani. Some Remarks concerning the Venetian Attitude towards the Crusade", în *Annuario. Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica*, 3 (2001): pp. 105–116.

[14] Palmira Brumett, "The Ottomans as a World Power: What We Don't Know about Ottoman Seapower", *Oriente Moderno*, 20 (2001), no.1: pp. 1–21

2. THE STAGE

One of the main weaknesses of these overseas Venetian territories was their dispersion over a wide area which covered North-Eastern Adriatic and Istria, Dalmatia, Montenegro, Albania, the Ionian Islands, Epirus, Peloponnesus, the Cretan Archipelago, the Aegean Islands, the Eastern Greek mainland, the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean.[15] Thus resulted a lengthy, tortuous and fragmented frontier which required quick mobilization and intervention in an endangered area. Many of these zones were exposed to attack from various enemies even before the rise of the Ottomans. The Aegean archipelago was the target of many attacks from the Genoese, the Catalans of Athens or the Turkish emirates of Menteşe and Aydın; Dalmatia – for centuries the bone of contention between the Republic and the Kingdom of Hungary – was conquered by Louis the Great after the war of 1356–1358 and recovered only in 1409; Tana in the Black Sea was severely damaged by the attacks of the Golden Horde (1343) and Timur Lenk (1395).[16]

One should ask whether all the Venetian overseas territories were simultaneously exposed to the same risks and whether the Venetian government attached to them the same strategic importance. In this respect it should be stressed that certain regions such as Dalmatia, Coron and Modon, Crete and Negroponte had a highly strategic value for the Venetian government, Corfu was the cornerstone of the Venetian presence both in the Ionian and Adriatic Sea and Cyprus received particular attention after its acquisition in 1474, while some other possessions were considered important only for a limited period. Such was the case of Tana, a rival commercial emporium for Genoese Caffa, in the fourteenth century,[17]

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[15] Benjamin Arbel, "Venice's maritime empire", pp. 131–136. On the situation of Morea, see Oliver Jens Schmitt, "Griechen, Albaner, Tzakonen, Bulgaren: venezianische Briefschaften aus der Morea (1463/1464)", in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte und Kultur SüdostEuropas*, 2 (2000) : pp. 161–189, Bernard Doumerc, "Le problème des confins en Morée vénitienne à la fin du XVe siècle", in *Italy and Europe's Eastern Border (1204–1669)*, edited by I. M. Damian, I. A. Pop, M. St. Popović, Al. Simon (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 109–117. On Albania see Oliver Jens Schmitt, "Die Venezianischen Jahrbücher des Stefano Magno als Quelle für die albanische und epirotische Geschichte (1433–1477)" in *Südosteuropa. Von vormoderner Vielfalt und nationalstaatlicher Vereinheitlichung*, edited by Konrad Clewing, Oliver Jens Schmitt (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2005), pp. 133–182. On Dalmatia see *Venezia e Dalmazia*, edited by Uwe Israel, Oliver Jens Schmitt (Rome: Viella, 2013).

[16] Virgil Ciociltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth centuries*, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 199–203.

[17] Şerban Papacostea, "Quod non iretur ad Tanam. Un aspect fundamental de la politique génoise dans la Mer Noire au XIVe siècle" in *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, 17(1979), no. 2 : pp. 201–217.

or the island of Tenedos, which was one of the main reasons for the War of Chioggia.[18]

The long row of overseas territories shaped Venice's maritime empire. As many studies have shown, the galley – the ship *par excellence* of the medieval Mediterranean – was quite fragile and had limited cargo capacity. Usually it had to put ashore frequently to resupply.[19] This condition was easily satisfied as long as Venice preserved its overseas possessions. As a consequence the loss of a certain territory had direct repercussions on the Republic's ability to control a sea route or to dominate a specific maritime area. Such was the case in 1261 when the fall of the Latin Empire forced Venice to reconsider its policy in Romania; another example is the loss of Dalmatia in 1358, when the conquest of Louis the Great put in jeopardy the Republic's domination in the Adriatic. In both cases Venice struggled to re-establish its control in the contested region. After 1261 Venice struck a balance between military and diplomatic actions. On one hand, the Republic tried to organize an anti-Byzantine crusade aimed at regaining control over Constantinople; on the other, Venice was compelled to sign truces with the Byzantine Empire, a solution which temporarily ensured the protection of the Venetian subjects, ships and territories.[20] These measures had only limited success, as the anti-Byzantine crusade was never launched and the survival of the Venetian Empire was counter-balanced by the Genoese foothold in Constantinople and their expansion in the Black Sea.

The loss of Dalmatia was even more significant for Venetian interests. The conquest made by the King of Hungary, Louis the Great, inflicted a double blow, commercial and strategic, on Venetian interests. Not only did Hungary conquer two major trading cities, Ragusa and Zara, but the access gained to the Adriatic broke the Venetian domination in the area and created the premises for a more elaborate attack in the following years. The alliance between a significant land power (Hungary) and a maritime power (Genoa) during the so-called "War of Chioggia" was a serious threat, as Venice could have been attacked from its inner defensive zone – the Adriatic. Indeed, the Genoese fleet used the Dalmatian ports as the base for an attack against the Venetian fleet stationed at Pola and the Hungarian army, with the support of the Lord of Padua, blocked

[18] Freddy Thiriet, "Venise et l'occupation de Ténédos au XIVe siècle", *Mélanges d'Ecole Française à Rome*, 65 (1953) : pp. 219–245.

[19] John E. Dotson, "Foundations of Venetian Naval Strategy : from Pietro II Orseolo to the Battle of Zonchio, 1000–1500", *Viator* 32 (2001): pp. 113–126; John F. Guilmartin, *Galleons and Galleys*, (London: Cassell & Co, 2002), pp. 105–156.

[20] Angeliki E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins. The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II 1282–1328*, (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 101–102; Donald M. Nicol, *Venezia e Bisanzio due città millenarie protagoniste della storia*, transl. Lidia Perria (Milan: Bomiani, 2001), pp. 198–294.

the city of Saint Mark from the land. Venice managed to survive eventually due to popular mobilization, the timely return of Carlo Zeno's fleet from the Eastern Mediterranean and the lack of coordination between its enemies. However, the lesson of the War of Chioggia was a bitter one. Venice had shown serious difficulties in coping with a land army, defending a vast overseas empire with its fleet and even protecting the Adriatic, i.e. the core of its maritime power as long as Dalmatia remained in hostile hands. Many of these problem re-emerged during the conflicts with the Sublime Porte.

The War of Chioggia had another side effect. According to an old but still valuable article by Camillo Manfroni,[21] the cost of the war forced Venice to reduce the size of its military fleet in the subsequent period to a level which threatened the main interests of the Republic. As long as the Balkan Peninsula remained politically fragmented, this minimum involvement had no serious consequences; but once the Ottomans conquered large parts of the Peninsula along with Western Anatolia, the situation changed dramatically. The Venetian Empire became vulnerable not only from the land but also from the sea, and from the reign of Bayezid I onwards the Ottoman fleet became one of the risk factors for the Venetian ships and territories in Romania.

Along with these developments, from the end of the 14th century onwards, Venice began a policy of territorial conquest in Northern Italy which in the long run shaped its history in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. At a certain point the city of St. Mark ceased to be mainly "a maritime Republic" and the Terraferma began to overshadow the *Stato da Mar.* Moreover, "the creation, maintenance, and increasing institutionalization of a standing army affected Venetian life at all levels".[22] To quote just one example, "the accumulation of military and Terraferma offices was becoming a major avenue to high political office in the republic".[23]

3. THE BALANCE OF FORCES

All these evolutions point out to a significant transformation suffered by the Serene Republic during the fourteenth–sixteenth centuries. To use a metaphor, the "whale" of the previous centuries changed its shape to that of a double-winged lion. Both parts of the body – the Terraferma and *Stato da Mar* – received many

[21] Camillo Manfroni, "La crisi della marina militare di Venezia dopo la guerra di Chioggia", *Atti del reale istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti*, 69 (1909–1910) : pp. 983–1003.

[22] M. E. Mallett, J. R. Hale, *The Military Organization of a Renaissance State, Venice c. 1400 to 1617,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 203.

[23] *Ibidem.*

blows from the Republic's enemies. But while the Terraferma was recovered after the catastrophe of Agnadello in 1509,[24] the defense of the maritime territories seemed to be more and more problematic. Not only was the *Stato da Mar* exposed to the Turkish threat in time of war, but it also suffered in peacetime from pirates' raids and Ottoman dignitaries' extortions. Venice tried to react to all these challenges through a combination of diplomatic and military means. If the historians underlined the diplomatic ability of the Republic and its role as a "*centro di mediazione tra Occidente e Oriente*",[25] the military route was of no lesser importance. One can count during the fifteenth–sixteenth centuries no less than seven large clashes with the Ottoman Empire: 1416–1419; 1422–1430; 1444 (the Crusade of Varna); 1463–1479; 1499–1503; 1537–1540; 1570–1573. All of them ended in the Venetians' defeat, even if sometimes, as in 1416 (the Battle of Gallipoli) or in 1571 (the Battle of Lepanto) crushing defeats were inflicted on the Ottoman fleet. During each conflict, Venice seemed to build up its strategy on a close collaboration between the fleet and the defensive system overseas or, in Robert Hale's terms, "the dialogue between ships and shore".[26] There is also an important difference between the various clashes. During the first three conflicts, Venetian maritime superiority was undisputed, but from 1463 onwards the situation changed drastically. In 1470 Negroponte was lost without any intervention from the Venetian fleet, and the same thing happened in 1499 and 1500, when Lepanto, Modon, Coron and Zante fell into Turkish hands without any serious naval engagement.

Historians have put forward various explanations for this reversal, most of which are strongly related to the political and military aspects of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. I shall try to summarize them without any pretentions to being exhaustive.

Both the Ottoman and the Venetian fleet seemed to have used a large variety of oar ships. In the fourteenth century and at the beginning of the fifteenth century Venice had the upper hand mainly because of its galleys, while Bayezid I's or Mehmed I's fleets were composed of vessels of lesser tonnage. This tech-

[24] On this event, its context and its consequences see *L'Europa e la Serenissima: la svolta del 1509 nel Ve centenario della battaglia di Agnadello*, edited by Giuseppe Gullino (Venezia: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2011).

[25] This is the title of the collective volume *Venezia centro di mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente secoli XV–XVI: aspetti e problemi*, edited by Hans Georg Beck, M. I. Manousakas, Agostino Pertusi (Florence: L. Olschki, 1977).

[26] M. E. Mallett, J. R. Hale, *The Military Organization*, 429; see also Simon Pepper, "Fortress and Fleet. The Defence of Venice's Mainland Greek Colonies in the Late Fifteenth Century", in *War, Culture and Society in Renaissance Venice: Essays in Honour of John Hale,* edited David Chambers, Cecil H. Clough, Michael Mallett, (London, Rio Grande: Hambledone Press, 1993), pp. 29–55.

nical advantage along with experience at sea goes a long way to explaining the naval superiority of the Venetians. After the fall of Constantinople, the galley became the backbone of the Ottoman fleet as well. Although one should bear in mind the differences between Ottoman and Venetian construction parameters, it is no exaggeration to assume that, from a technical point of view, the two camps used comparable ships. Only at Lepanto did the firepower of the Venetian galleasses placed in the frontline seem to have given an advantage to the Christian camp.

The number of ships gathered by the two camps was a completely different matter. From the beginning the Turks seem to have enjoyed undisputed superiority. In the fourteenth century and in the first half of the following century this was a way to compensate for their navy's technical inferiority; after their conquest of the Byzantine capital it was a method to terrify their enemies and to overwhelm the Venetian defense. The stratagem was efficient at least in the case of Negroponte, where the Venetian admiral Nicolo da Canal fled without putting up a fight, and in the battle of Zonchio (1499), where most of the Venetian ships retreated without engaging their enemies. The example of Zonchio is of particular interest because on that occasion Venice assembled the greatest fleet in its history. According to *Historia Turchesca*, Antonio Grimani had at his command 107 vessels (44 light galleys, 16 heavy galleys, 12 *griparia*, 3 *fuste* and another 32 boats of different types) along with a further 25 ships provided by Andrea Loredan, the *provveditore* of Corfu.[27] It was an exceptional military and financial effort if we bear in mind that in 1495 35 galleys were equipped in and in 1498 only 13. By contrast, the Ottoman fleet numbered 277 ships (60 galleys, 30 galiots and *fuste,* 3 heavy galleys, 2 large carracks and so on), a figure not far off the usual estimation of the Sultan's maritime forces; in 1530 the Venetian ambassador to the Sublime Porte, Tommaso Mocenigo, counted no less than 272 Ottoman galleys "*grosse, bastarde et sottile*", and a main force of 204 galleys in Constantinople and Gallipoli. Although impressive, this estimation seems to ignore the corsair's ships, which could have been added at any moment to *kapudan pasha*'s navy.

This striking inferiority explained why Venice always tried to find allies against the Turkish peril. The reasons seem to differ from one epoch to another however. Throughout the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth, the search for allies was strongly related to Venice's intention to keep the war

[27] Donado da Lezze, *Historia Turchesca (1300–1514)*, edited by I. Ursu (Bucharest: Carl Göbl, 1909), p. 223. For other estimations see Frederic C. Lane, "Naval Actions", p. 149, Simon Pepper, "Fortress and Fleet", 44; Jan Glete, *Warfare at Sea 1500–1650. Maritime Conflicts and the Transformation of Europe*, (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 93; John F. Guilmartin jr., *Galleons and Galleys*, p. 73.

costs as low as possible. Thus in 1363 the Serene Republic offered to equip two galleys in a naval league that was to reunite 8 galleys. Later, in 1396, Venice was ready to equip 5 galleys for the Crusade of Nicopolis but only on the condition that other Christian powers gather a further 20 similar ships. This goal changed drastically from the second half of the fifteenth century, when the Ottoman superiority forced the Republic to find a way to counter the number of Turkish ships.

The search for allies was also a process with continuities and discontinuities. In the first half of the fourteenth century, Venice's main objective was to form an alliance with the Christian powers in Romania threatened by the emergence of the Turks. The victories of Adramyttion and Smyrna were the result of a regional naval league comprising Venice, the Hospitallers, the Kingdom of Cyprus and, theoretically, Byzantium.[28] Towards the end of the century this kind of *passagium particulare* no longer seemed efficient and thus, from that moment on Venice supported the crusading projects of the Kingdom of Hungary. All of them shared a similar idea; a Christian fleet was to sever the connection between the Anatolian and European territories of the Sultan while a land army was to crush the Ottoman forces in Europe and relieve Constantinople. Unfortunately, this simple project to isolate the Sultan's forces never succeeded.

The same fate was shared by another strategic idea which aimed to compel the Ottomans to disperse their forces on various fronts in Asia and Europe. In this respect all of the rivals of the Ottoman Empire in Asia such as the Emirate of Karaman, Uzun Hasan or, later, the Safavids were perceived as potential allies of Venice. Despite some success during the reign of Uzun Hassan, such alliances could hardly prove their efficiency. Due to the great distances and different political and military aims coordination between the Christian and Muslim enemies of the Ottomans was almost impossible. Venice or its allies could only hope to keep the sultan busy on various fronts as long as possible in order to obtain acceptable peace conditions.

The situation was not much different in respect of the potential Christian allies. No one was eager to sacrifice financial or military resources to protect the Venetian territories. Even worse, for long periods, the Republic had tense relations with the Kingdom of Hungary and with the Hospitallers of Rhodes, i.e. with two main enemies of the Ottomans. As a result, many anti-Ottoman projects were undermined from the beginning by the lack of trust among the potential allies. This was also the case in the wars of 1537–1540 and 1570–1573.

[28] Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade: Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydin (1300–1415)*, (Venice: Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies, 1983), pp. 21–40.

Each partner was disappointed and bemoaned a lack of loyalty on the part of its allies. Both conflicts ended in a bitter distrust between the former allies.

Thus it is no wonder that from the second half of fifteenth century one can perceive in Venice a growing lack of confidence towards the idea of an anti-Ottoman alliance. After the war of 1537–1540 many members of Venetian elite cast doubt on the anti-Ottoman projects and expressed the firm idea that the best solution was to maintain watchful neutrality. Bernardo Navagero stated that "all alliances are full of difficulties because each party has different aims and as each is out for his own advantage, problems arise from the moment a treaty is signed; thus many opportunities for attacking the enemy are lost and, besides, the forces promised not being, in practice, actually raised, either for lack of pay or irreconcilable differences of opinion among the commanders, the enemy gains time and you lose reputation which is important in all affairs". Furthermore, according to the same Navagero "it is better in my view, to treat all enemy rulers as potential friends and friends as potential enemies."[29] As a result Venice was confronted with a large dilemma; it had no sufficient forces to confront the Turks alone but also had little confidence in its allies.

Quite apart from the insufficient military forces and the difficulties finding trustful allies, success in war depended on a valuable strategy. Besides the aforementioned ideas related to severing the link between the European and Anatolian Ottoman provinces and the dispersion of the Sultan's forces on various fronts, Venice build its strategy on firm confidence in the collaboration between the fleet and the defensive system created in its maritime empire. It was a defensive stance which required very good coordination between the ships and the Venetian garrisons but also the control of the sea. In the first confrontations with the Turks in 1416–1419 and 1423–1430 this condition was fulfilled, but the tide changed in the conflict with Mehmed II. As already mentioned, in 1470 the Ottoman fleet emerged from the Straits. Its main role was to transport and to support the Ottoman troops sent out to conquer Negroponte. It was a delicate mission, as an attack from the Venetian fleet led by Nicolo da Canal could have easily compromised the entire expedition. Nevertheless, such an attack never happened. According to a witness account, the Sultan's fleet looked like a "floating forest".[30] The terror inspired by such a sight explained the retreat of the Venetian fleet. For Frederic C. Lane, the episode was only a temporary setback which did not shake Venetian confidence in its naval prowess.[31] Lane

[29] *Apud* M. E. Mallett, J. R. Hale, *The Military Organization*, p. 216.

[30] Domenico Malipiero, *Annali Veneti dall'anno 1457 al 1500*, edited by Francesco Longo (Florence: Gio. Pietro Vieusseux, 1843–1844), I, 51: "il mar parea un bosco a sentirlo a dir, ar cosa incredibile, ma a vederlo è cosa stupenda."

[31] Frederic C. Lane, "Naval Actions" p. 147.

points out that in the following years the Venetian galleys were able to attack Ottoman coasts and to pursue a campaign to Sattalia and Candeloro without suffering any serious losses. Nevertheless, this perspective should be slightly altered, since it reflects only the Venetian perspective. A more balanced approach would also consider the Ottoman strategy. From the Sultan's point of view, the Venetian naval expedition of 1472 had no serious impact on the war on the Eastern front; Negroponte remained in Ottoman hands and the conquests in Anatolia were short lived.[32] Furthermore, the projected conjunction between the Venetian fleet and Uzun Hassan never took place and the collaboration between the Republic and another Anatolian enemy of the Ottomans, the Emir of Karaman, had little impact on the general balance of power. Moreover, the lack of reaction on the part of the Ottoman fleet had to do with the Sultan's preparations for the war against the Ak Koyunlu confederacy, not with any kind of Venetian naval superiority. We could easily accuse Nicolo da Canal of a lack of heart in 1470, but a similar attitude is to be found again during the war of 1499–1503.

My point is that the Negroponte incident not only shook Venice's confidence in its maritime supremacy but also inflicted a heavy blow on Venetian defensive strategy. As the leaders of the fleet decided to take no action, the fortresses were on their own and with some exceptions – such as the siege of Scutari in 1473[33] – resistance depended only on the garrison's determination, on the strength of the fortification and on the abundance of supplies. Venice had to place further emphasis on his strongholds and on its ability to resist an ottoman assault. In this respect the Republic invested a great amount of resources in the sixteenth century. Many fortresses were reconfigured according to what was known as the *trace italienne*,[34] a bastion-type fortress with low and thick walls, platforms for the artillery and a wide and deep moat. As military historians stress, this new type of fortifications invalidated the ancient way of besieging a town. But such defensive systems needed time and money. Venice began to rebuild its fortification of *Stato da Mar* in a systematic way only after the war of 1499–1503. The almost continuous state of war in Italy between 1509 and 1530 and the huge expenses incurred explained why this process was slow and only gradually implemented.

[32] A similar view is shared by Luciana Pezzolo, "Stato, guerra e finanza nella Repubblica di Venezia fra medioevo e prima età moderna", in *Mediterraneo in armi (sec. XV–XVIII)*, edited by Rossella Cancila, (Palermo: Associazione Mediterranea, 2007), 71. The author underlines that even though the loss of Negroponte was balanced by the acquisition of Cyprus, the war with the Porte (1463–1479) shattered the Venice's conviction in its maritime superiority.

[33] On this episode see Simon Pepper, "Fortress and Fleet", p. 42.

[34] Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567–1659. The Logistic of Spanish Victory and Defeat in Low Countries' Wars*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 7–10.

Such fortification works had the expected outcome only in very few cases (for instance during the Siege of Corfu in 1537) but in most situations the Ottomans prevailed in their attempts to conquer the Venetian strongholds. Along with the Ottoman's ability to gather large amounts of troops and resources, the defenders were doomed by the long lines of communication, the insufficient fleet support and the inferior number of land troops.

One should also take into account that the Venetian strategy and tactics seem to have changed very little from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. The large fleets of the sixteenth century were composed of various types of ships, with different types of propulsion and different tonnages. It was very difficult to deal with such diversity and even more problematic to compel various types of vessels to react as a single unit on the open sea when various factors such as the winds, the currents and the waves could easily have changed the theatre of battle. There were differences in the speed and mobility not only between oar ships and sailing ships but even between the light galleys and the heavy galleys. In sum, success in the naval war was strongly connected with effective coordination of the entire fleet.

Along with the military and logistic issues, contemporary sources put the blame for the failure against the Ottomans on the abandonment of ancient virtues. Some chroniclers speak of corruption, vices and insubordination in the Venetian fleet which confronted the Ottomans at Zonchio and which was unable to save Lepanto, Coron and Modon. In the same vein, Frederic Lane emphasizes that the career of Antonio Grimani, the Venetian commander at Zonchio, "epitomizes that diplomatic and financial ability were gaining priority over naval service in determining political success in Venice. This change in priorities was one factor in the decline of Venetian sea power".[35] As in the case of the Byzantine navy or, later, in the case of the Spanish army and fleet, appointment to high command was more a matter of influence and wealth than a question of military abilities. Thus, the lack of discipline and the vices deplored by the Venetian chroniclers were only a side-effect of a structural crisis.

A similar crisis broke out almost in the same period in Terraferma and the loss of almost all Venetian territories after the Battle of Agnadello is a clear symptom.[36] However, in this case the Venetian revival and, ultimately, the recovery of the lost territories were possible not only because the Republic man-

[35] Frederic C. Lane, "Naval Actions", p. 167.

[36] For the institutional consequences of the military failures, see Bernard Doumerc, "Novus rerum nascitur ordo: Venise et la fin d'un monde" in *Chemins d'outre mer.* Études sur la M*éditerranée médiévale offertes à Michel Balard*, edited by Damien Coulon, Catherine Otten-Froux, Paul Pagès et Dominique Valérian, (Paris : Publications de la Sorbonne, 2004), pp. 231–246.

aged to respond adequately to the challenges of the land war at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but also because the struggle in Northern Italy was directed against a coallition undermined by various disputes among the allies. By contrast, the *Stato da Mar* had to confront a single enemy with a unique center of command and with great military and economic potential.

The defensive stance adopted against such foe seemed the best strategy to follow but such a choice compelled Venice to adopt a reactive policy which was doomed to fail in long run. The reactive strategy meant that the Republic was always a step behind, that the Venetians usually awaited the Ottomans' first move. Thus the Ottoman forces were able to invade a territory and triumph over the Venetian defenders by exploiting the local resources. It may seem a minor aspect but for the military strategists of the sixteenth century it was a very important one. Success in the early modern war depended on the ability not only to gather a strong army but also to use it properly, to inflict heavy blows not only on the enemy's troops but also on his territories, population and economy. For the experts of the epoch, the best strategy to pursue was to wage war by invading the enemy's territory. The Ottomans reached the same conclusion by their own means and they basically adopted such strategy in each conflict directed against Venice.

The Republic did not attempt a similar solution until 1463, when an army led by Bertoldo d'Este attacked Peloponesus. But, even in this case, the Venetians planned only a short-lived offensive. Once the expedition's goal – the conquest of Hexamilion – was accomplished, the offensive had to turn into a defensive stance. It was then Bertoldo d'Este's mission to strenghten the fortifications and to protect the peninsula along with the Venetian fleet from the Turkish attacks. In 1463, the sudden death of the Venetian commander put an end to the Venetian ambitions and the following attempts of another Venetian *condottiero*, Sigismondo Malatesta, shared a similar fate.

The defensive strategy had another weak point: it was strongly dependent on accurate and up-to-date information from the Turkish camp. Paradoxically, the impressive network created to collect and to transmit any news of interest from the Ottoman Empire seemed to be of little use to Venice. Not only the Venetians were sometimes misled by rumours or false evidence spread by the Ottomans in order to hide the real intentions of the Sultan, but even in the case of accurate information the Republic struggled to find a quick and adequate response. This was due partly to the "system configuration". Obviously, all the news from the Levantine territories converged in the city of St. Mark but one can hardly find two identical versions of the same event; as a result the Venetian government had to deal daily with a large amount of news sometimes contradictory, sometimes brief, sometimes doubtful, and was forced to postpone the decision until the information was confirmed by other sources. From this fact

derives another important issue: the weak collaboration between the various territories which formed the Venetian *Stato da Mar*. Ships built in Crete or Corfu were sometimes used to defend other territories[37] but such actions were possible only at the central government's orders and one should ask oneself if the lack of initiative of local authorities actually strenghtened or weakened the overseas territories confronted with an Ottoman attack.

CONCLUSIONS

I am aware that this overview has left aside many aspects of the Ottoman–Venetian relations. I am also aware that rather than offering answers I have just pointed to some issues which still deserve further examination. The general picture of the long period of Ottoman–Venetian contact seems to be one of progressive Venetian decline. The slow process of the Venetian Empire's contraction was less the result of the Republic's policy and reactions and more the consequence of Ottoman imperial policy. In the age of Mehmed II and Bayezid II, the sultans' aim was to expel Venice from the Black Sea and the Aegean area and to conquer the Venetian possessions in Peloponesus and Albania. In a second phase the strategic Ottoman goal was to control the Adriatic shore to contest Venetian maritime power in its own gulf. In fact, as early as 1417, the Ottomans conquered Valona, which secured an important bridgehead in the struggle for the navigation of the Adriatic.

Once these two strategic objectives were achieved, the Ottoman progress slowed and the subsequent targets (Cyprus, Crete) were attacked after long periods of peace. It seems that the Ottomans preferred a weaker and docile Venetian Republic and, as a result, they conquered only the territories which were of strategic or economic value.

The peaceful solution was also supported by the Venetian camp at least from the beginning of the sixteenth century. For the Serene Republic it was the only way to preserve both its *Stato da Mar* and its oriental trade, despite their progressive contraction.

[37] Ruthy Getwagen, "The Contribution of Venice's Colonies to its Naval Warfare in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Fifteenth Century" in *Mediterraneo in armi (sec. XV–XVIII)*, edited by Rossella Cancila, (Palermo: Associazione Mediterranea, 2007), pp. 113–174.

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PLACES

HISTORICAL PERSONS

MODERN AUTHORS

The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans constitutes a major change in European history. Scholarship on the topic is extensive, yet the evidence produced by decades of research is very scattered and lacking comprehensive synthesis, not to mention consensual interpretation. Although major political and military milestones seem to have been investigated thoroughly, there is a notable absence of more theoretical and interpretative approaches that overarch the entire phenomenon rather than merely individual aspects. Scholars have hitherto addressed the topic from various perspectives and employing a wide range of methods, but Byzantine studies, Ottoman studies, Eastern Mediterranean studies and national historiographies in the Balkan countries have yet to establish either a coherent collaboration or a consistent model of interpretation. This volume therefore rather aims at opening and structuring a new heuristic approach and at coordinating a field of studies that is of crucial importance for understanding change in European history.

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Die osmanische Eroberung des Balkans gehört zu den wichtigen Wendepunkten in der europäischen Geschichte. Trotz umfangreicher Forschungen bleibt das Feld fragmentiert. Theoretische Modelle wurden nur auf Teilaspekte angelegt. Auch mangelt es einer stärkeren Verklammerung der in der Regel disziplinären Herangehensweisen, die durch nationalhistoriographische Traditionen nicht immer erleichtert wird. Gerade die innerregionalen Forschungskontakte sind eher schwach ausgebildet. Der vorliegende Band will ein Forschungsfeld strukturieren und disziplinäre Perspektiven zusammenführen, um eine feste Grundlage für eine breitere eurasische Einordnung der osmanischen Expansion auf dem Balkan zu schaffen.

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